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MASSACHUSETTS
CONVENTION OF CONGREGATIONAL MINISTERS
—
HISTORICAL SERMON
WITH AN
APPENDIX
1887.

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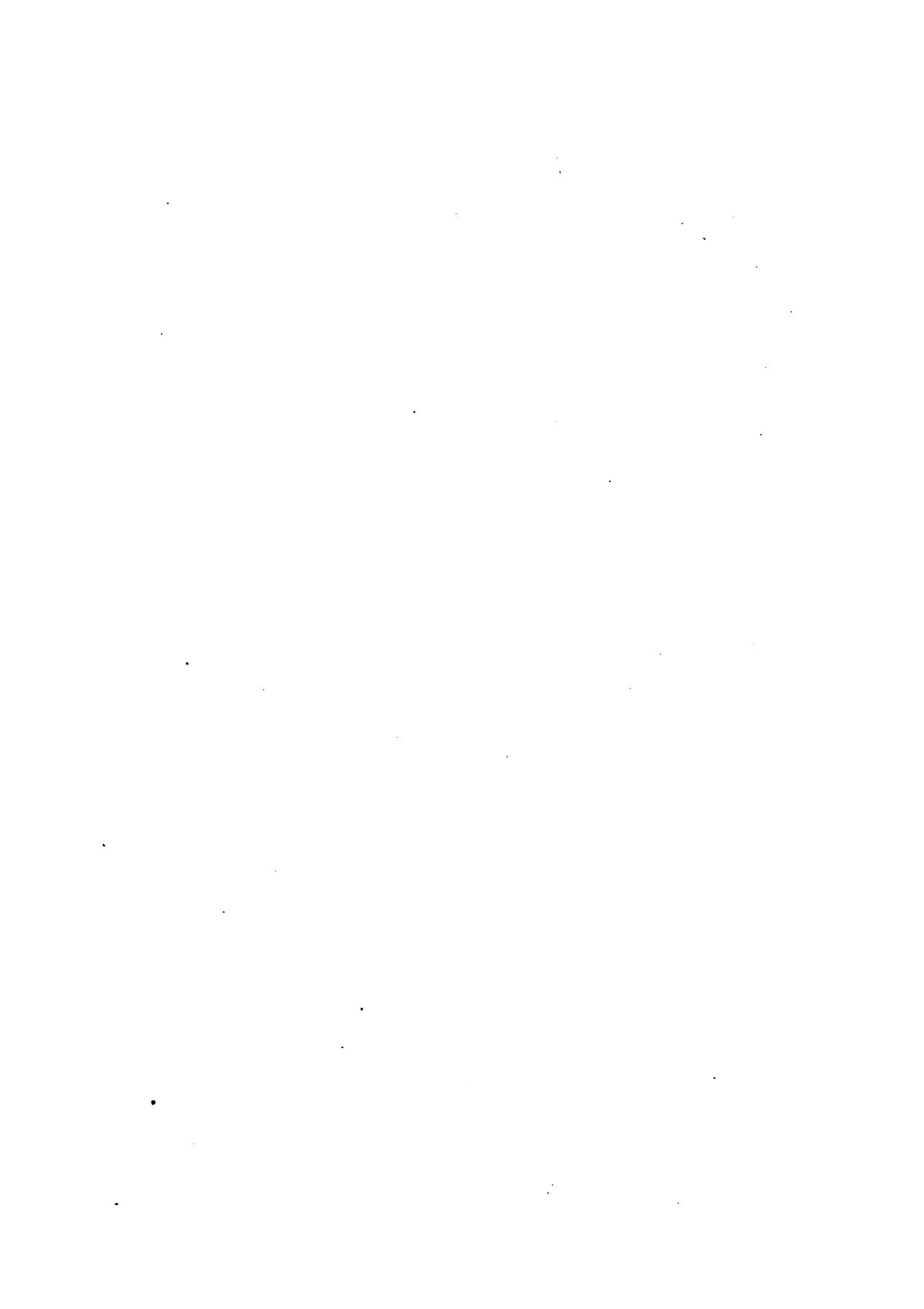
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FROM

Rev. Henry F. Jenks.

7 Sept. 1888.





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HISTORICAL SERMON

PREACHED BEFORE THE

MASSACHUSETTS

Convention of Congregational Ministers

BY

REV. JOHN W. HARDING,

Pastor of the First Church of Christ in Longmeadow,

In the Park Street Church, Boston, May 26, 1887.

WITH AN

APPENDIX

*Containing Additional Historical Matter, Lists of Officers, and Preachers of
Convention Sermons.*

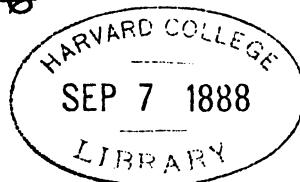
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1888.

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Rev. Henry F. Jenkins.

PRESS OF
STANLEY AND USHER,
BOSTON, MASS.

THE SERMON.

Children's children are the crown of old men; and the glory of children are their fathers.—Proverbs 17: 6.

THIS ancient proverb, as it reads backward and forward, giving to the old men the children's crown, and to the children the fathers' glory, falls in with the opportunity given me by this occasion to throw the shuttle to and fro, and to weave from its too obscure and scant material the history of the Massachusetts Convention of Congregational Ministers. The simple fact that it is the only surviving testimony to the Catholicity of Congregationalism, having outlived the controversies of Calvinist and Arminian, Trinitarian and Unitarian, and that it still unites the Congregational ministers of Massachusetts by the beautiful bond of a charity sweet and precious as the alabaster box that Mary broke in the presence of her Lord, is enough to make it deserving of a memorial that shall hand it down to our children's children.

The preacher of this Convention sermon to an audience so peculiar has a double problem to work out: its first difficulty, to find an appropriate theme; its second, to set it on fire by any kindling inspiration that still may burn in the embers of this ancient hearthstone. Carefully, from year to year, have the embers been covered up in the interests of a courtesy which has been thought to belong to the properties of this occasion. We have met to say unto the ashes — peace. We have met as Christian preachers, Massachusetts

Congregationalists, honest and earnest, but divergent, seekers after truth, with the tacit understanding that all living themes and deep convictions should in this hearing preserve a decorous silence; with the presumption that we differ so widely that the real truth cannot have free course and be glorified in the frankest utterances of friendly debate. I have been led to accept this as the existing fact, and to adopt its suggestion, that in this theological atmosphere, with meteorological conditions so uncertain, and in the interests of this armed neutrality, it may be discreet to let the Convention itself speak from its own archives. It shall therefore be my attempt at this time to recount what it has done and said during its long and eventful past, and therefrom to derive some suggestions pertinent to its present opportunities and its outlook for the future.

The origin of the Convention is somewhat obscure. Its permanent records begin May 25, 1748, when the minutes of the previous year were read; Matthew Byles was chosen scribe; the accounts of the last year presented; thanks voted to the treasurer, Dr. Sewall; a committee of inquiry raised respecting a farm at South Kingston; Dr. Wigglesworth, professor of Harvard College, preached; and the Convention adjourned to meet at Dr. Sewall's hospitable parsonage for their social entertainment.

The Convention had evidently become by this time a standing institution. In 1633, more than one hundred years before, Governor Winthrop had penned in his journal this item: "The ministers in the Bay and Sagus did meet once a fortnight, at one of their houses, where questions of moment were debated." Fifty years later, in 1684, we find records of ministers' meetings that were precursors of our Convention, and there certainly was one in 1704. The first Convention sermon that we have certain knowledge of was preached by Rev. John Sherman, of Watertown, in 1682. When the Colonial Charter of 1692 established a civil order, the election of magistrates occurred on the last Wednesday in May, and the practice came about of holding an annual

meeting of the ministers of the State on election week. Rev. Thomas Hooker, whose counsel had great weight, had in his old age strenuously advised the stated meetings of ministers, and we learn from Mather's *Magnalia* that as early as 1698 there had been "established constant meetings in the several vicinages through the most part of the country, whereat they have informed one another of their various exercises, and assisted one another in the work of our Lord." A distinct reference is also made in the *Magnalia* to the general Convention, and afterwards, in his *Ratio Disciplinæ*, Mather describes the Convention at length, and carefully discriminates it from a "provincial synod." "The ministers," he says, "choosing a moderator, do propose matters of public importance referring to the interest of religion in the churches; and though they assume no decisive power, yet the advice which they give has proved of great use to the country. . . . Excellent things have been concerted and concluded for the propagation of religion, and collections produced for that purpose in all the churches. And motions have been hence made unto the General Assembly of the Province for such acts and laws as the morals of the people have called for."

The Convention was also the occasion for a social reunion and festivities of no small importance. The governor and Boston magistrates, the speaker and representatives of the General Court, were invited to dine with the ministers on the day after the election. "Some resemblance," remarks Dr. Mather, "of what is called the Feast of Moses and Aaron, in the Netherlands."

As the month of August is now devoted to ministerial vacations, it was then a slice from May and June for rest and change and jollity. The majority of Massachusetts ministers were alumni of Harvard. It was grateful to them to revisit college scenes, to meet their classmates, and to rejoice in the free and generous hospitalities of Boston. The winter was past, the snow was over and gone, the May flowers had appeared, the time of the singing of birds had come, the

vines with the tender grape gave a good smell, and the ministers said, "Arise, let us go to Boston;" and on horseback, with saddle-bags, by twos and threes, they jogged along the Bay Path and through the fragrant woods, meeting hospitable welcomes at noon and night, or in their chairs and yellow chaises with great leathern springs, they journeyed to the metropolis with delight unknown to Pullman cars and fast expresses.

Let Thomas Barnard, of Salem, describe it in his Convention sermon for 1793. His theme, "The Ministers of Religion Considered as Members of Civil Society." "The occasion naturally reminds us," he says, "of our rank as members of civil society. Our government, in its distinct branches, makes a public appearance at this season in the house of God, who rules over all, chooses one of our order to lead in its devotions, and to impress the mind with fitting sentiments. We are particularly respected in the festivities of the day. In this civil society we have a rank peculiar to ourselves." He descants upon other "views of our present meeting." It is cheerful. "The gayety of the season, the operation of air and exercise after the retirement and gloom of winter, the sight of each other after so long an absence, mutual congratulations upon our mutual health and prosperity, the wild joys of the populace excited by this memorial of their rights and liberties, the pomp of government and the parade of the military, the entertainments of a generous town, in which plenty and elegance are joined with cheerful and pleasing society,—all conspire to enliven and render us happy; nor doth any precept of reason or of our holy religion restrain us from yielding to the tendency of the situation, within the bounds of temperance and sobriety."

As the citizens of Boston grew more and more prosperous, their generous hospitalities broadened, and at the same time various charities, the germs of which we trace in the Convention, widened into the anniversaries of numerous benevolent societies. Anniversary week became a great religious and

social gala season, to which not only the country ministers delighted to repair, but also their wives and aunts and cousins and deacons, and many elect women and divinity students and young women who were interested and interesting. The generous town for a time rose to the increasing demands for promiscuous hospitalities. The churches of different denominations established their several bureaus of entertainment, until the throng of religious people grew to such proportions that even Boston gave in, and no more gave out, and the anniversaries died of repletion. Meanwhile it was a blessed period for the country ministers at first introduced to the "generous town" and all the concomitant festivities of election week by the Convention.

Dr. George E. Ellis, in whose genial and venerable presence we still rejoice, gives refreshing memories of his boyhood that belong to that old régime. On Monday afternoon of anniversary week, his clerical uncle and aunt would arrive from Stowe, about twenty miles away, at the gate of his father's spacious yard in Summer Street. When the stately couple had received their kindly welcome, the old chaise, dimmed and cumbered with the winter's mud, would be dispatched to the wheelwright's to be rebraced and washed and varnished; the harness would go to the harness-shop to be mended and oiled. In good season would the wealthy host conduct his reverend brother-in-law to the tailor's shop to be measured for a suit of finest broadcloth. Meanwhile the parson's wife would be accompanied by her sister-in-law of another Boston branch of the family to the best milliner in Washington Street for new headgear and other outfit befitting her consort's new attire. And so would the latter end of that anniversary week be an improvement on its beginning, and all the intervening days be joyful with sermons, prayer-meetings, shoppings, dinners, bookstores, and all those gentle and jovial and spiritual recreations which these our swift and pushing days know little of.

Let us now glance at what the Convention has done and said. Its first recorded act of public moment was to recom-

mend a general collection in the churches for propagating Christianity, at the same time taking up its own collection of £300. It proceeded to establish an evangelical fund for missions in destitute places. In connection with a gift of £100, old tenor, to Mr. Torrey, of South Kingston, it sent a vote of remonstrance to his people for not better supporting their minister. Money was also appropriated to certain unnamed gentlemen who preach the gospel in such places in this Province where the people give them little support. Here is the germ of our present organized and munificent system of Home Missions. In 1756 a letter was addressed to the Convention from a number of aggrieved brethren of the Second Church in South Falmouth, asking their advice and assistance relating to the instalment of one Mr. Clark. The Convention, though not without question about the propriety of becoming a standing council, bore decided testimony, *nemine contradicente*, against the irregular and pernicious action of the South Falmouth church. As such cases of reference multiplied, the Convention grew more and more shy of bearing their testimony. We see in their quasi-ecclesiastical proceedings a gradual recession from the original high church, or Presbyterianized Congregationalism, toward Independency, and afterwards, while letting go little by little of the Cambridge Platform, a gradual adoption of the fellowships of associated Congregationalism, as at present recognized.

In 1758 the ministers of the Convention were desired to inculcate obedience to civil magistrates, and it was voted to congratulate the governor on his accession. There began to be evidences of a growing civil discontent that is significant of the approaching revolution, and also of a certain degree of relapse into the barbarism of various disorders and immoralities, as compared with the earlier colonial days. The next year the resolve of a council relating to disorder at ordinations was presented and considered in a printed address to the people. In 1762 an address was sent to George III, on his accession to the throne of his ancestors, and another

to Governor Bernard on his appointment to the command of the Province. Soon after, a committee waited on His Excellency to thank him for the kind care he was pleased to take of the Convention's address to His Majesty, and also for the regard he had shown to the interest of learning in the Province, and particularly in not suffering a charter for a college in the county of Hampshire, and humbly desiring a continuance of His Excellency's favor to Harvard College. Boston influence and the Harvard *esprit du corps* were, as usual, regnant in the make-up of the Convention. In 1763 the annual collection was applied to the needy widows and children of deceased ministers as well as to indigent clergymen in service. In 1766 the Convention appointed trustees for the Judah Monis fund, given by a Christianized Hebrew and teacher in Harvard College. In 1767 the first step was taken for an incorporation to hold in trust the accumulating moneys of the Convention. A correspondence was instituted with the Presbyterian synod of New York and Philadelphia, relating to a more intelligent and mutual knowledge of the churches in various parts of the country, and better ways of guarding the Christian ministry from ignorant and unworthy candidates. A letter was addressed to a committee of the deputation of dissenters in England, thanking them for "the concern they have expressed for our religious liberties, and desiring their future assistance and influence for the preservation of the same, and in particular that a bishop may not be sent among us." The next year, 1768, the thanks of the Convention were given to Rev. Dr. Charles Chauncy for his just and admirable rejoinder to the sermon of the bishop of Llandaff, preached before the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, and also for his learned and judicious reply to Dr. Chandler's appeal for an American Episcopate. But while opposed to a bishop, the Convention sent out certain selected portions of the Thirty-nine Articles and homilies of the Church of England as emphasizing their Calvinistic faith. The venerable Dr. Sewall was from time to time much exercised about the prevailing heresies, and made repeated pro-

posals to the Convention that it bear testimony against the dangerous errors in opinion, as well as corruptions in practice, and that it reaffirm its adherence to the doctrines of the New England fathers and the confession of 1680. A progressive theology gently negatived each of his proposals as they in turn came up. A committee, however, was appointed "to wait on Dr. Sewall, and in the name of the Convention to thank him for his kindness and hospitality in entertaining them for so many years at his house, and also expressing affectionate regards and fervent prayers that God would comfort and support him in his present weak and declining state."

Premonitions of the Revolution are now frequently evident in the transactions of the Convention. In 1771 a congratulatory address was voted to Governor Thomas Hutchinson with considerable opposition. It expressed in courteous terms "the persuasion that in this dark and difficult season His Excellency will employ every wise and prudent method to restore the former harmony between Great Britain and her colonies." The governor replies in the highest style of diplomatic politeness. In 1773 an able committee of fifteen was appointed to make diligent inquiry into the sense and meaning of the platform and the general practice of the fathers with respect to church order and discipline, and their elaborate report was printed and published. In 1774 an address was voted to Governor Gage. The securities of the Convention funds were sent into the country, and on account of the impending uncertainty and troubles, no collection was taken or distribution made. The provincial Congress assembled at Cambridge sent a message to the Convention, proposing that the ministers should officiate by turn in the army as chaplains. The Convention voted an address which was heartily patriotic and nearly unanimous, conveying their deep sympathy and entire confidence in the measures now being concerted for the relief and defence of their much-injured and oppressed country, devoutly commanding the Congress and their brethren in arms to the divine guidance and protection, and signifying their readi-

ness, with the consent of their several congregations, to serve as chaplains. The address was presented by the moderator, President Langdon, of Harvard College, and through the Hon. Joseph Warren, presiding officer of the Congress.

In the stormy year of 1776 the Convention met at the house of the Widow Coolidge in Watertown.

The failure of a committee appointed in 1781 to present an address to His Excellency John Hancock was inquired into the next year, but summarily disposed of by a strong negative vote upon the question whether the Convention will attend to the subject, apparently emphasizing the personal disfavor in which Governor Hancock was held by the ministerial body. The next year, 1782, on the presentation of an address from the Hampshire North Association, lamenting the great want of Bibles in that region, and seconded by similar statements from other parts of the country, a committee was instructed to take this matter into earnest and practical consideration. This action led to the cheaper printing and more general supply of Bibles from American presses, and to the formation of Bible societies.

After twenty years' delay, occasioned by the civil disturbances, the plan of securing a legal trust for the funds of the Convention was consummated in 1786 by the incorporation of the Massachusetts Congregational Charitable Society, to consist of thirty members in equal proportions of clergy and laity. This society has been since this date the legal trustee of the Convention, devoting its own separate funds to the same benevolent purpose of relieving and supporting the indigent widows and children of deceased Congregational ministers, although with severer restrictions than the Convention imposes, the Charitable Society confining its distribution to the widows and children of pastors who had official relation to some church at the time of their decease. In 1791 a correspondence with the Baptists and the Quakers indicates the cessation of ancient animosities and distrusts. In 1795 was accomplished the happy result of a protracted correspondence during many years with other religious

bodies, both Presbyterian and Congregational, in the organization of an intelligent ecclesiastical fellowship, as related to the requisite qualifications of candidates for the ministry, the transmission of ministers from one church or body of churches to another, the local associations of ministers, the scope and sphere of evangelists or traveling ministers, and accurate statistical information belonging to a well-defined ecclesiastical fellowship between local churches and denominational bodies.

An elaborate address of the Convention in 1798 to President John Adams, and his answer to the same, reveal in guarded yet expressive terms somewhat of the intensity of political feeling that ran high between the Federal and Republican or Jeffersonian parties. A household tradition of an old Cambridge family well describes this political heat. A little girl of a shy disposition would run to the gate of her father's dooryard to hiss a rider-by who did not wear the black cockade upon his hat. The badness of the times, probably more or less exaggerated by this current political ardor, was set forth by a pungent address of the Convention to the public in general and the respective congregations in particular, urging them seriously to consider and vigilantly to resist the alarming inroads of infidelity and immorality.

In 1802 the Convention expressed its tender concern for the moral and religious instruction of youth, and particularly urged the importance of using the Bible in schools. This deliverance was published in the newspapers and addressed to the people at large, and especially to those appointed by law to visit the schools. In 1809 a strong memorial was addressed to the Massachusetts Legislature on dueling. The next year a deliverance was made for the benefit of the sparser settlements in New Hampshire and Vermont, discouraging the preaching of Congregational ministers, evangelists, candidates, or missionaries in parishes with settled ministers, when not invited, as fomenting confusion and dissension, and throwing open our societies to sectaries and itinerants of every description. Here endeth the ineffectual

attempt to discourage the progressive movements of the Baptists, Wesleyans, and other dissenters from the Congregational standing order.

Meanwhile the evidences were ripening of a thorough doctrinal divergence between the Orthodox and Unitarian members of the Convention. Dr. Charles Stearns, of Lincoln, who, though a conservative, fought valiantly to the last against disruption, and framed his Convention sermon for 1815 into a special plea against such divisive tendencies, moved in vain a republication of the Cambridge Platform and other documents of the New England fathers. It was too late for any such exhumations in the interest of peace. About this time the laymen grew lukewarm in their hospitalities, and it was voted that the Convention provide dinner at their own expense. Sharp swords were whetted in the Convention sermons. Dr. Alvan Hyde, of Lee, maintained that those who embraced heresies under gospel light are no less exposed to the wrath of God than those who live in immoral and wicked practices, and one of the greatest of heresies is to deny the essential divinity of our Lord. Dr. William E. Channing retorted in a severe arraignment of "the system of exclusion and denunciation in religion." In 1822 the Worcester North Association presented to the Convention the question: "What constitutes a Christian church with which we ought to hold communion?" After much debate it was tabled by a vote so close as sufficiently to reveal the existence of two persistently opposite classes in the Convention. A resolution offered by Mr. Packard, of Shelburne, that "whereas each class have not only a right to their sentiments, but in all respects have equal rights and privileges in this Convention, the preacher shall be nominated by each class in turn," was indefinitely postponed. Thereafter the Convention devoted its deliverances mainly to philanthropic issues: war; privateering; a court of nations, looking to the abolition of war; Sabbath profanation; the transmitting of the mail and opening postoffices on the Lord's day, with petitions to Congress germane to such matters;

intemperance ; the providing of ardent spirits for Convention dinners ; the provisions made in the manufactories of the State for the moral and religious instruction of children employed in them. Isaiah Thomas knocked at the door of the Convention in the capacity of a book agent. It was voted inexpedient to admit him. Voted, Not to become formally auxiliary to the American Peace Society nor to the American Indian Aid Society, while seconding these and other philanthropies, and among them the Colonization Society.

In 1831 a committee reported the expediency of entirely dispensing with a Convention sermon, to obviate the theological heats stirred up by this pulpit opportunity. After prolonged discussion the report was tabled, and the ferment continued by what a correspondent of The Christian Register describes as a ghastly arraignment of liberalism, until, in 1837, it was partly allayed by mutual consent that Rev. Henry Ware should be elected preacher. At his appearance in the pulpit the Boston laymen of the liberal side came into the public meeting of the Convention in such numbers and with such goodwill that the annual collection was increased tenfold. Thereafter it became a mutual understanding that the Orthodox members should fill the pulpit for two years and the Unitarians for one year.

Since this armistice has been established the Convention has turned from theological differences of the vicinage to consider an encyclical of the Pope ; to deplore Fast-day abuses ; to recommend to ministers that they abstain from the use of tobacco ; to make a timely and powerful deliverance against American slavery, which contributed not a little to strengthen weak knees and open dumb lips ; and at the inception of the Civil War it passed resolutions as stirring and hopeful as those which stood by the Revolution of 1776. Whatever its doctrinal differences and disturbances, it has always been patriotic and philanthropic, and without a shadow of dissent, united in the one perfect and lovely bond of its beautiful trust for the needy widows and children of its departed members ; and that trust has always been administered with

an assiduous and loving care, the strictest equity, and most thorough impartiality. The total amount of funds now belonging to the convention is about \$9,000, while to its legal administrator, the Massachusetts Congregational Charitable Society, belong about \$175,000; the annual income of which is given to more than ninety widows and orphans.

Having thus reviewed the doings of the Convention, let us glance at its sayings, and in particular at a few of the more significant of its pulpit utterances. The list of its preachers is a memorable one, and many interesting side-lights are thrown by the Convention sermons on the eventful changes that two centuries have wrought. They were also prophetic of changes now transpiring, and of a progress that is making the history of future days. In them we find germinal suggestions of the great missionary and other benevolent enterprises of our day, and in them we also perceive the tokens of doctrinal differences that existed from the earliest settlement of New England. There were conservatives and liberals from the first, although it was not till after the Whitefieldian revival of 1740, abundantly illustrated by the Convention sermons, that the Calvinistic and Arminian parties became distinctly recognized, and that the latent Arianism began to be avowed.

The Convention sermons were mainly *conciones ad clerum*, but with a wider scope than the term would indicate. As the preachers exhort one another, they also instruct the people, and throw upon the historic screen the thoughts and manners of the times. They give us photographs of the homiletical, ecclesiastical, industrial, sociological, and even hygienic aspects of their generation. They show how one soweth and another reapeth, and reveal both the old paths and the new departures. They show at one time a stern regard for truth, stiffening into bigotry; and at another time the truth sacrificed in the interests of a charity that is too weak and limp to be the bond of perfectness. They show

that the only conservatism worth fighting for is that which perpetuates essentials, and that the only manly liberality is that which is also godly, and which has in it the promise and the potency of an immortal life. Only the swiftest glances can be allowed me at these sermons of two centuries.

Would you have homiletical advices? None are better than Cotton Mather's, given in 1722. His text: "I know thy — service." Thus he begins: "Service! The occasions for it in a necessitous world are how manifold, how marvelous! the felicities of the men who are set apart, as we are, for the doing of it, how very desirable!" Three exclamation points in the first sentence, and the whole discourse bristling with lively apothegms, luminous with historic illustrations and classical quotations, not wearisomely pedantic, packed with common-sense, and fraught with telling incentives.

"The studying of our sermons," continues Dr. Mather, "should be a holy exercise. They are oblations to a holy God as well as to the people. Oh, do not offer a maimed thing unto his holy Majesty! Sirs, we are to take pains with our sermons. God will curse that man's labors that lumbers up and down in the world all the week, and then, upon Saturday in the afternoon goes to his study; whereas, God knows that time were little enough to pray and weep in, and get his heart into a fit frame for the duties of the Sabbath. But our sermons being thus well prepared, we shall be yet more serviceable, if they be as well pronounced. We must cast out our eyes from our notes. If we must look to see what arrow is the next to be taken from our quiver, it is such a reading as wholly takes away the life of speaking." After a wide range of such like pertinent advices: "Finally, so foolish was I and ignorant, some years ago, that if I had then treated upon service, I should have ended here, and should have thought there would not have been any need of saying any more. But the experience of six times seven years in public service has taught me otherwise. I take notice that our Saviour, having said unto the angelical pas-

tor of Thyatira, 'I know thy service,' what now should follow but, 'I know thy esteem, thy applause, thy grateful reception, thy plentiful remuneration in the world'? No, not a word of this, but he presently says, 'and thy patience.' Strange humors to be met with, withal. Yea, the strange humors of many reputed our godly brethren, creating such trials for our patience as we never could have imagined. . . . Can you bear, my brethren, can you bear as well as do, for your glorious Lord? You can't be pillars in the temple of your God, if you can't bear very many heavy things imposed upon you. Can you bear the vilest ingratitude, the basest misconstruction? Can you bear the javelins of envy, tongues of serpents, heaps of indignities, the quills of porcupines? Yea, if the worst thing you do for the people be only to save their lives from the tremendous destroyer, for this very thing (*O perpetuam infamiam*) they will seek to destroy and murder you." Dr. Mather here alludes to the angry clamor against inoculation of the small-pox, then first introduced in Boston, and which he had strongly championed, and to the throwing of a lighted grenade into his chamber.

Would you have political preaching? Hear Dr. Jeremy Belknap, minister of Federal-street Church in Boston: "There is a monopolizing spirit in some politicians who would exclude clergymen from all attention to matters of State and government, which would prohibit us from bringing political subjects into the pulpit, and even threaten us with the loss of our livings, if we move at all in the political sphere. But, my brethren, I consider politics as intimately connected with morality, and both with religion. If it be the duty of gospel ministers to preach morality, it is their duty to preach it to public as well as private men. Had the apostles lived in these days and among us, who have the power of choosing our own rulers, I have no doubt that they would have exhorted us to exercise our privileges; would have advised the people to carry the principles of Christian morality to a town meeting, as well

as to the exchange ; would have advised legislators to carry the same principles to the Senate and House of Assembly, to executive and judicial offices, to the bar, the bench, the council board, and the governor's chair."

Would you hear a "liberal" preacher? Listen to a few words from the Convention sermon of 1722, by Samuel Locke, president of Harvard College. "A great part of the Scriptures, written in remote times, must necessarily partake of the imperfections of language in those times, and referring to customs and opinions long ago grown obsolete, it becomes very difficult to be sure of the precise meaning and full force of those Scriptures ; and if they are mistaken in any degree, and that mistake is introduced as a principle or medium of proof, the consequence must be injurious to truth. How greatly under the influence of bigotry and ignorance are they who imagine that the whole truth contained in the Word of God can easily be discovered, or has, in fact, ever been so."

Dr. Locke unfolds from internal evidences the progressiveness of revelation, deprecates the weakness of building up systems of theology on isolated proof-texts, and the divisive and virulent animosities created by such narrow and artificial systems. He pleads for a broad overlook of the whole country of the enemy, instead of marching in one beaten track. He laments the mistake of getting too much hard doctrine out of Paul's parentheses within parentheses, and the ardent zeal that gave the strongest colorings to his subjects. He warns against the extravagance of imagination and a mystical cast of mind in biblical exegesis ; appreciates the work of a learned criticism, and deprecates the crowding down creeds and confessions upon pain of eternal punishment ; rebukes the impatience of some with deistic freedom, since revelation will bear the strictest scrutiny ; pleads for a rational investigation rather than any reliance on a divine afflatus and immediate communications, and for a better accommodation of preaching in style, images, and method to the capacities of hearers, and more frequent excursions into the natural fields for illustrations.

Would you have character exalted above belief, and made the vital test, and finally crown the symmetrical adjustment of faith and works? You may not find it in one Convention sermon, but you will find it in the series. When President Holyoke, most conservative of the Orthodox, blows his ram's-horn blast loud and sharp and long against the Pharisees and Sadducees of his day,—that is to say, the Arminians, Socinians, Antinomians, Pelagians, and Arians, or coming Unitarians,—in the same breath he urges morality to the utmost jot and tittle, and makes character the final end of doctrine and the net result of all religion.

Would you have the preaching that touches this world's business? Hear Samuel Phillips, of Andover, as he turns from a hard wrestle with the problem of harmonizing predestination and freewill to address the Boston citizens in the Convention audience assembled in 1753: "Honored and Beloved: I would congratulate you on the fair prospect which you now have of a good worldly prosperity, and especially would I commend two of your methods. You employ the poor of the town in the prosecution of the linen business for the women and children ashore, and in the fishing business on the sea for men." And then he adds his hearty wish that the honorable our political fathers may consult in this, as well as in other articles, namely: now, while the land has rest, to provide for war. It was the son of this divine who furnished supplies of powder for the army of Washington.

Would you learn about the prospects of the heathen who have no knowledge of the historic Christ? Robert Breck, of Springfield, accused in his own day of heresy, adopted the present orthodox view that there was for them a possible hope of salvation. Peter Clark, of Salem village, held that the light of Nature is wholly deficient, never sufficient to teach the way of worshiping God to his acceptance. Dr. Jedediah Morse, of Charlestown, was an agnostic: "As to the heathen who have not the Scriptures, we judge them not. God, who is wise and just and good, is their judge, and we leave them in his hands."

Would you have a fair handling of the Whitefield revival, its mingled good and evil? You will find it in the Convention sermon of Nathaniel Appleton, of Cambridge, and also somewhere between the "testimony" of the Convention, signed by its moderator, Nathaniel Eels, and the rejoinder of Whitefield's supporters, made by Joshua Gee; and for a very severe arraignment and castigation of Whitefield and his party, you will look to Dr. Chauncy, of Boston, the born and practised controversialist, sharp, caustic, and imperious, the chosen man to cope with the bishop of Llandaff in the fight between dissenter and churchman, and the true successor of Jonathan Mayhew in the arena of free discussion.

Passing by many other pregnant suggestions of the convention sermons, listen for a moment more to a plea for toleration; perhaps the strongest of many that proved entirely ineffectual in keeping the doctrinal peace between the Orthodox and the Unitarians. It is by Dr. Charles Stearns, of Lincoln, himself belonging to the Orthodox party. It is a plea founded upon a scriptural rather than a creedal unity.

"Let us be patient with Trinitarians, if with their three persons they have but one God. Let us be patient with those who speak of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost as the Scriptures speak of them, and proceed no further. . . . Let us not break with others because they use not the technical term Trinity." Dr. Stearns argues toleration from the history of bitter controversies that have passed away and left clearer skies, from the necessary admixture in limited human minds, however sincere, of some tares of error with the wheat of truth. "We are none of us gods, but men. It ought to be our daily prayer that we may understand our errors, by God's assistance. Shall we then call ourselves by that proud title 'The Orthodox'? Oh, vanity of man! Why not 'The Good'? The next step is to infallibility. When we shut persons out of our Christian society, we lose the best opportunities for reclaiming them. When we prescribe error in one instance, others will occur, and we must on this principle separate again and again, and so the Church will

become, like matter, infinitely divisible. Nothing at present hinders good reasoners from maintaining the truth, and truth is a sufficient defence against error. Restriction is dangerous to truth as to commerce. Every minister has power already, if he use it discreetly, to defend the purity of his own desk. If he will not use it, who shall compel him? Should one party predominate, that party can never establish its measures while the brotherhoods retain their present liberties." Thus goes on this champion of toleration, heaping up his arguments unto the practical conclusion: "Wherefore, my advice is to ministers and brethren: Remain as you were till the present heats are over. Only let a majority of the Massachusetts churches refuse to join either of the present parties. Stand still, and in a little while you shall see the salvation of our Zion." But in a little while came the inevitable disruption,—however lamentable, still inevitable, so long as oil and water will not mix, so long as thunderstorms must come to clear the murky air, so long as human nature and the human intellect are what they are, so long as a true peace is sought by the sword of truth under forms of liberty.

There are two objects of this Convention, and only two, which in the light of the past take definite shape, and in the outlook of the future seem to make its continuance desirable. The first is: The beautiful charity it holds in trust. There can be no objection to that; every prompting of our Christian sensibilities pleads that it still be cherished.

The other object is: The occasion that the Convention presents for keeping alive old and sacred memories of a united Congregationalism; in polity still united, without a question to disturb; in doctrine still divergent, and with no apparent hope, or even desire, that the Orthodox who believe in a personal Deity, revealed in the Holy Scriptures for the restoration of man from sin and ruin to holiness and everlasting life, through Jesus Christ our Lord, can ever clasp hands with those Unitarians who deny an authoritative

revelation in the Bible, and the need of any supernatural redemption, and who would resolve religion into "ethical culture," which can make for righteousness without any faith in a personal God, much less in Jesus Christ as his messenger of love and truth.

But leaving out of the account these mutually repellent and irreconcilable differences, there are some who have not yet given up the desire and the hope that this Convention may prove a magnet that shall draw together its divergent members, if not for organic union, at least for exchange and reciprocity of thought for the possible solution of some doctrinal problems, the discovery of some unknown qualities hidden in misunderstandings and misinterpretations, and that belong more to disputation of words than to spiritual realities. What evil could come, who will deny that much good might come, out of such a conference? Not simply to rehearse commonplaces and generalities of outside consent; not merely to take up a collection; but to reason together with entire frankness and sincere goodwill upon the great themes of first and last importance, the grandest interests both of time and of eternity.

Listen to voices from the honored dead, and also from the living, to whom we gladly turn our ear. In 1871 a committee, composed of George W. Blagden, John Todd, Seth Sweetser, Samuel K. Lothrop, Rufus Ellis, Edwin G. Adams, and James H. Means, reported to the convention their unanimous and hearty desire for a better mutual understanding. "Looking," they say, "at our respective differences, as Calvinists or Arminians, Trinitarians or Unitarians, the signs of our time indicate that in regard to some of us there is ground for reasonable hope that the great essential truths of the gospel, in respect to which we have differed, may be so simply stated that we, as we have not of late, may walk much more nearly together, and be agreed in the work of our common Lord; while others have gone yet farther from the old paths, and will not walk therein." In this hope these brethren recommended measures to make the annual meetings of

the Convention more conducive to this end. In 1878 Rufus Ellis, lamented and beloved, sent out a circular letter to urge the attendance of Congregational ministers upon this anniversary gathering, and to inquire as to the feasibility of holding a supplementary meeting during anniversary week for the purpose of bringing together the Trinitarian and Unitarian sections of the old Congregational body to listen to frank and explicit statements of one another's views.

What think you? Is this nothing but weak concession, vapid sentiment, a mere chimera to be whistled down the wind? Did not these brethren of both sides love our Lord? Had they not a measure of his Spirit? Does not their thought of this possibility of a reunion honor the better instincts, the truer sensibilities that lie deeper in the Christian heart, and nearer to the heart of Christ, than our sparing theologies and our speculative metaphysics?

Supposing, for instance, that, drawn together by this possibility, and this Convention the occasion for our conference, the creed question should be laid before us. It might cast a new light on our differences about creeds if James Freeman Clarke should stand up in the midst and say, as he said last September in the Church of the Disciples: "Every man who believes anything has a creed. The more important the truths that he believes, the more he is bound to utter them. We are always under twofold obligation—to truth on the one side, and to love on the other. Truth without love tends to a hard dogmatism; love without truth to a weak concession of principle. Neither, therefore, is to be sacrificed to the other. We must find a way by which the two are to be reconciled. . . . As a Unitarian I believe in character, and in religion as the best basis of character. I believe in goodness, and in Christ as the living fountain of goodness. I believe in love to God and in love to man, and feel bound to be openly loyal to both convictions. . . . It is no more dogmatic to say, 'Love to God,' than it is to say, 'Love to man.' And what God has joined together, let not man put asunder."

Now I know that there is a good deal to be read between

these lines, by the Orthodox and the Unitarian severally, but it might do us good all around to read them and remark on them together. And even though there can only be found a few, would not these few find fit audience in the candid and courteous interchange of deep and honest convictions, not one of which would any of us surrender for any seeming congruity or patched-up compromise. Out of genuine differences, friendly debate may focus light upon seeming oppositions which shall resolve their parti-colored bars into the pure white light of heaven.

In one thing we must all, as true men, agree ; that where are fundamentals of moral and religious truth, we *must* hold to them, never to surrender them ; for it would be the capitulation of our manhood, it would be corrupting our spiritual integrity, it would sap the foundations of our self-respect, it would prove us false to the Searcher of our hearts, and give the fatal lie to that regal and regnant faculty — the conscience that is God's voice within.

And as those feathers which give to the free bird its beauty also assist its flight, although not each and every one indispensable, so we would not ask of one another the sacrifice for any outward uniformity of thought or form of any unessential even, which may after all assist our freer opinions, our higher flight, and wider outlook.

Unity in diversity, diversity for a unity more beautiful and true, is God's law in all his kingdoms, whether of nature or of soul. Let then this old Convention live ; hearten it to a better life ; revive its potency and promise both of love and truth, and let its faith and hope and charity still abide.

In the presence of that Divine Spirit whose informing influence and constraining power have been invoked in the solemn worship of this hour, let us not forbid the hope, however dim at present to our dissentient minds, that though there will always be many flocks in the kingdom of our Lord, there will be recognized in some coming day, under the brighter and wider illumination of his guiding, sanctifying, uniting Spirit, One Fold and One Shepherd.

APPENDIX.

THE MASSACHUSETTS CONVENTION OF CONGREGATIONAL MINISTERS.

FROM the "Historical Sketch of the Convention of the Congregational Ministers in Massachusetts," printed for the Convention in 1821, a little pamphlet now entirely out of print, the following pages are reprinted, containing some historical facts referred to in the preceding pages, as well as adding others.

THE Convention has been accustomed to address the civil rulers and to use its influence for the encouragement of learning and the conservation of the public liberties. It has presented addresses to the King, to the Governors, to the Provincial Congress, and to the President of the United States, and memorials to the Congress of the United States. . . .

The Convention has maintained a friendly and Christian correspondence with other associated ministers of the Protestant Reformed churches at home and abroad. In 1750 "the Convention, being sensible of the great importance of cultivating a stricter union with our brethren of the Presbyterian and Congregational denominations in England, and particularly their deputation at London," voted to choose annually a committee in their behalf "to manage and cultivate said union and correspondences, and annually report their proceedings to the Convention, and receive their directions from time to time." On the reception of a letter from delegates from the associated pastors in Connecticut and a committee of the synod of New York and Philadelphia, inviting them to join with them in a proposed convention at New Haven in 1767, the Convention voted: "That although we are not prepared to send delegates to the proposed convention, yet we take this occasion to declare our sincere affection to our brethren and our fellowship with them in the gospel, and our readiness to unite our counsels and endeavors with them for the spreading of the gospel and defending the religious liberties of these churches; for cultivating love and harmony among ourselves and with our friends abroad, and for promoting the kingdom of

our common Redeemer." A committee of correspondence was chosen, and instructed also to write to the committee of deputation of dissenters in England.

. . . In 1771 the Convention chose a committee "to maintain a correspondence with our brethren in the Southern Governments; and in 1792 a committee to consider the proposal of forming a correspondence with the general Presbytery of the Southern States, and General Association of Congregational Ministers in Connecticut." In 1793 a committee of correspondence was chosen, with instructions to write to those two bodies, "proposing to them not to receive or countenance any candidate from us who does not bring credentials from a regular body among us known to them, and assuring them that we will observe the same rule with respect to candidates from them; and informing them that we shall be glad to hear from them upon all subjects which relate to the interests of our common Christianity, and to communicate every information upon such subjects as may tend to promote the interests of religion."

The Convention has occasionally called the attention of ministers and churches to the principles of their platform, and given cautions and admonitions against prevalent errors. In 1702 it published "A Seasonable Testimony to the glorious doctrines of grace, at this day many ways undermined in the world." In 1704, "to serve the great intentions of religion, lamentably decaying in the country," it was proposed by Convention "That the pastors of the churches personally discourse with the young people in their flocks, and with all possible prudence and with goodness endeavor to win their consent to the Covenant of grace; that, to this end, they adopt the practice of making their personal visits to all the families that belong to their congregations;" that, as far as practicable, they thus induce their people "publicly and solemnly to recognize the Covenant of God, and come into such a degree of the Church state as they shall be willing to take their station in, but not to leave off till they shall be qualified for, and persuaded to communion with the Church in *all* special ordinances; that for such as have submitted to the government of Christ in any of his churches, no pastors of any other churches, any way go to shelter them under their wing, from the discipline of those from whom they have not been fairly recommended; that they who have not actually recognized their subjection to the *discipline* of Christ in his Church, yet should either upon their obstinate refusal of such a subjection, or their falling into other scandals, be faithfully treated with proper admonitions about the method of managing which the pastors with their several churches will be left to the exercise of their own discretion." The desire and intention were also expressed "That at the General Convention of Ministers there may be given in

an account of their success" in the proposed undertaking; "that the Lord may have the glory of his grace, and the condition of religion may be better known and served among us." In subserviency to these intentions, it was proposed "That the associations of the ministers in the several parts of the country may be strengthened and that they may hold more free communications with one another."

In 1756, on receiving a letter with papers from a number of aggrieved brethren of a church, relating to the installation of a minister, the Convention voted it as their opinion "that all such proceedings as these are represented to be are very irregular, against which they think themselves obliged to bear their testimony as having a manifest tendency to destroy these churches, if not reasonably discountenanced."

In 1757 it was "recommended by the Convention to the ministers and people throughout the province to give themselves to more solemn and devout prayer and reformation of manners, in this very important crisis of our public affairs." The same year the Convention directed a letter to be written to a distant people that had received their charities, "expostulating with them upon their doing so little towards the support of the gospel and ordinances of religion among them; and representing to them that if they persist in such a conduct the Convention must withdraw the large assistance they have so long afforded them for this purpose."

In 1773 it was voted that the state of the churches in this province, with respect to church order and discipline, is such as to require the attention of this Convention. A committee was chosen to make diligent inquiry into the sense and meaning of the platform of church discipline, and the general practice of our fathers and of the churches in this land from their days with respect to church order. The report of this committee was directed to be printed and published.

Before the institution of Bible societies, which have so wonderfully contributed to the diffusion of the holy Scriptures in our time, the Convention paid particular attention to this most important subject. On receiving an address from the North Association in Hampshire County, in 1782, representing the great want of Bibles in that part of the country, and praying the Convention to use their influence by petitioning the General Court to grant assistance and encouragement for printing the Bible in this country, and several similar representations from other parts of the country, the Convention chose a committee to take the subject under serious consideration, and use such means as should to them appear most promising, "to put it in the power of those who are destitute of Bibles, to purchase them in the most cheap and expeditious manner."

An address in 1789 from the Association of Ministers in and about Cambridge, relative to licensing, encouraging, or employing candidates for the ministry, induced the printing and publishing of "A Recommendation from the Convention of the Congregational Ministers at Boston, May 26, 1790." After a preamble, stating the ground of the recommendation, the Convention

1. Recommend it to all young gentlemen, who design to devote themselves to the work of the ministry, to spend that portion of time in the study of divinity, previously to appearing in the pulpit, which improved and judicious advisers shall think necessary to qualify them for public teachers.

2. They earnestly recommend it to Congregational ministers and people not to encourage or employ any one as a candidate for the ministry except he show by written testimonials that he has been carefully examined respecting his acquaintance with the principles of natural and revealed religion, and other things necessary to qualify him for the work of ministry, and that he is properly recommended to it, as a man of knowledge and good character by some regular Congregational Association or Presbytery.

3. To ministers not associated, they suggest the importance of their commencing members of regular associations as soon as opportunity present; for say they "we are all members of the same body, and are called by the Gospel of Christ to coöperate with each other in promoting the interest of a learned, judicious, and religious ministry."

In 1799 the Convention unanimously voted an address to their brethren of the respective associations and the unassociated ministers in this Commonwealth, "recommending to them seriously to consider the alarming prevalence of infidelity and immorality, and exhorting them to vigilance and activity in their several stations in resisting the progress of those principles, and reviving and promoting the spirit of true Christianity by those means which they may think most expedient."

In 1802 the Convention published an address expressing their sentiments "on the propriety and importance of using the Scriptures in schools, calling the attention of their brethren, of the people at large, and especially of those who are by law appointed the visitors of our schools to this interesting subject."

In 1804 a motion was made in Convention to address the Associations of Congregational Ministers on the subject of forming a convention "for the purpose of agreeing upon a plan of friendly ministerial union, and for establishing a general association." The Convention chose a committee to consider and report upon the proposition, instructing them to transmit it to the several Associations of Congre-

gational Ministers in the Commonwealth, requesting them to take the subject into their serious consideration, and to offer their sentiments upon it to Convention through their committee previously to the meeting of the Convention in May, 1805." At that meeting the committee reported the returns they had received; and, on the whole, concluded their report in favor of the proposition. After a discussion of the report and mature deliberation, the question of acceptance was determined in the negative.

On certain questions relating to church order proposed to the Convention by an association in 1813, the Convention, learning "that a particular case exists which gave rise to the questions, and to which the opinions of Convention if pronounced would in all probability be applied," declined giving a distinct answer, but earnestly recommended "that, in any case of difficulty existing between churches, means should be employed in the proper ecclesiastical way, and with the spirit of Christian meekness and charity to bring it to an amicable adjustment or a regular decision." . . .

OBJECTS OF CONVENTION.

FROM the transactions of the Convention, it appears that its design has been to promote brotherly love and religious improvement; to give advice to ministers in difficult cases; to consider the best means for preserving and promoting piety; to concert measures for the propagation of religion, and to promote collections for that purpose; to act in concert as far as suitable to the ministerial character, in all matters of general concern respecting the interests of religion and the order, peace, liberties, and prosperity of the Congregational churches; to hold correspondences with other associated pastors and churches relative to the interests of the church and of religion; to aid poor parishes in supporting their ministers; to assist indigent ministers; to provide funds for the relief of widows and orphans of ministers, and direct the distribution of this charity; to bear testimony against prevailing errors in doctrine, discipline, or manners; to remonstrate to delinquent churches and people concerning neglect to support the gospel; and to recommend whatever may be of general use to ministers and churches, or to the Commonwealth and country. It also appears that the proceedings relative to objects and persons external to the Convention have always been by way of counsel, recommendation, advice, or congratulation, and not on the ground of assumed or delegated authority.

UTTERANCES OF CONVENTION.

To illustrate the truth that the former times were not better than these, we select from the lamentations that the Convention uttered from time to time the following, being the substance of a "Circular address to congregations, if their ministers should think it expedient," May 30, 1799, and signed by Eli Forbes, Moderator, Jedidiah Morse, Scribe.

The topics of lament, among other specifications, are: "The present decay of Christian morals and piety, the awful prevalence of speculative and practical infidelity, the growing dislike and contempt of the gospel, nourished by a levity which does not seriously examine its evidence, and by a licentiousness which opposes its strict requirements, and by a pride which spurns its humbling yet merciful contents; which avows against it boasted human reason and philosophy, and courts public applause by novel, bold, and flattering doctrines.

" While we deplore our own deficiencies as Christian ministers, we must also lament the cold insensibility which many nominal believers discover to the obvious principles and duties of our holy religion; gross neglect and ignorance of the Bible; very defective views and impressions of the most important doctrines, precepts, and motives; conduct marked with a careless treatment or bold profanation of the Christian Sabbath; habitual neglect of the public religious worship, or a virtual profaneness of it by an unmeaning and hypocritical, a curious and fruitless, attendance; practical neglect and even contempt of the Lord's Supper and baptism; debasing homage to the principles and maxims of the world; neglect and decay of family worship and instruction, and of mutual watchfulness and Christian discipline in the churches. What dissipation, irreligion, and licentiousness in many of our youth; pernicious rage for wealth and splendor, for amusement and pleasure; selfishness; gratification of elegant and scientific tastes and sensual passions in characters negatively good, instead of that positive and vigorous piety which consecrates all our talents and affections; a mistaken catholicism; exterior decorum in the room of inward holiness," etc. After enumerating certain present perils and embarrassments, the ravages of a pestilential disease, etc., as enforcing the duty of an immediate reformation, the above appalling list of sins and derelictions was made the basis of a moving exhortation, and the whole address, after mature deliberation, was unanimously adopted by the Convention.

COTTON MATHER, in his brilliant and practical sermon on "Ministerial Service," thus speaks of the pastor's vocation: "And then our

serviceable visits to the neighbors—never for mere diversion, without some purpose and concern to do good in them, to let fall something or other that our friends may be wiser and better. Never be so facetious, much less so ludicrous, as to lose the gravity which may graft some useful maxim.

“And then there are the Pastoral visits, which are to be made on the pure design of knowing the state of the flock and suiting it with admonitions, exhorting and comforting, and charging every one as a father doth his children, that they should walk worthy of God; so warning every man and teaching every man, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus. Blessed apostle, must *every* one be looked after so! . . .

“But all proposals to be a good soldier of Jesus Christ must have this forever annexed: ‘Praying always with all prayer.’ Sirs, if you would be men of God, you must be men of prayer; your work must all be carried on with prayer; you must never be off your knees; yea, no strangers to whole days of prayer; I beseech you to become well versed in all the Christian Ascetics.”

IN Convention, May 28, 1702, Cotton Mather’s “Reasonable Testimony to the Glorious Doctrines of Grace, at this Day many ways undermined in the World,” was considered by the body and voted by them to be “published for the establishment of the churches in the present truth.” This recognizes the doctrines of the Church of England as of concurrent value with the Westminster Confession, for in this deliverance, “The doctrines of grace are laid before the churches in the very words of the Articles and Homilies of the Church of England.” Then follows a carefully prepared tissue of excerpts from the Articles and Homilies, with suitable references to the “Confession of Faith received among us,” and a fervent exhortation to hold fast to the truth as set forth in “the Ancient Faith of the Church of England at the first recovery out of the Romish Apostasy.”

THE earlier history of the Convention gives evidence of the gradual escape of the Massachusetts churches from the Presbyterianizing tendency towards a consolidated church government, and their escape also from the opposite extreme of independency, as they fell into the *via media* of Congregationalism. The Convention, as time goes on, becomes more and more wary of giving definite advice in particular cases and of even appearing to be a court of appeal.

THE discrepancies of view concerning the future state of the heathen who have never had gospel light, ranging from the “possible

hope" of Robert Breck to the agnostic view of Jedidiah Morse, are interesting in the light of current discussions. But the prevalent view was that of Peter Clark, who held to the utter insufficiency of the light of nature. "How deplorable the condition of the heathen who have no other light, to whom all is dark beyond this world, and who have no hope beyond death and the grave! The world by wisdom, that is, the highest improvement of natural light, knew not God."

As the scholarly divines, like Hooker and Cotton, graduates of the English Universities, who adorned the earlier pulpits of Massachusetts, gave way to a native-born ministry, frequent pleas are noticeable in the Convention sermons for a "learned" ministry. The Convention in 1743 put on record its unanimous testimony against a roving itinerancy and "private persons of no education or low attainments" becoming preachers. "If God should be provoked to send the plague of an unlearned ministry upon poor New England, soon will the wild beasts of the desert lie there, the houses will be full of doleful creatures, and owls and ravens will dwell in it." "God preserve our pulpits," cries Cotton Mather, "from illiterate usurpers."

PRESIDENT HOLYOKE's sermon, preached before the Convention in 1741, from Matt. 16: 6, on "The duty of ministers to guard against the Pharisaism and Sadducism of the present day," illuminates the theological fermentations of that day which culminated at last in the disruption between the Orthodox and Unitarians. Having given "a large explanation of the words," as meaning traditionalism and rationalism, the president of Harvard proceeds to group various current heresies and malpractices under these several heads, and then "to show that the caution given by our Saviour is apposite to the present occasion." A few sentences will suffice to illustrate the handling of controversial themes by the Convention preachers of that period. "Again, it is evident from the Pharisaism of the present day, that the caution of the text is seasonable to the traditions and opinions of any Fathers of the Church whatsoever, to the weakening of our attachment to Jesus Christ Himself, who is the chief corner-stone. We are not to rest any controversial point upon the authority of our Fathers, but upon the Word of God. Yet when we consult the writings of the first fathers of these churches, and compare them with the Law and the Testimony, doubtless we shall find that in most things, and especially in all which by any are accounted to be fundamental, they have spoken as becomes the Oracles of God."

"Another article of the present Pharisaism is the taking off our absolute dependence upon the righteousness of Christ, and leading us

to good thoughts of ourselves and our good works, whereby we shall seek justification by the Law."

"Another article of Pharisaism is a high pretense to Devotion, which is not answered by the life and conversation. There are those that make a full profession: they are constant perhaps in their family devotions, and diligently attend the public worship. But consider them in their civil life, and you cannot distinguish them from those that make no profession at all—nay, from the very heathen, unless it be by their worse morals. Notwithstanding their high profession, Mammon is their God and they mind earthly things. By such men we are made to stink in the nostrils of men of other countries, who, though they make no professions like ours, yet are many of them much honester in their dealings. . . . Since there are no laws that can be made by the civil magistrate against most of these things, since they can't punish covetousness nor the malicious tempers of men, and since the most palpable cheats are oftentimes so managed as to elude all laws that can possibly be framed against them, these things lie, Fathers and Brethren, peculiarly in your province to reprove, and to endeavor to convince the minds and consciences of all such nominal Christians, that their most diligent performance of the externals of religion, without a strict regard to their moral conduct, is but downright Pharisaism and hypocrisy, and that they shall in no case enter the kingdom of heaven." . . .

"We are thus to beware of Arminianism on the one hand and on the other hand of Antinomianism; and much more of those who are tainted with the doctrine of Arius, who, although they call themselves Christians, are not worthy of the name, while they endeavor to rob Christ of His divinity and set Him at an infinite distance below the Divine Nature. . . . Passing to the doctrines of the Sadducees, little less pernicious are the errors of Socinus, which may well be ranked under the head of Sadducism, in that the men of this way reject the revelations of the gospel, while at the same time they pretend to believe something of them. For while they assert that Christ was a mere man, that he had no existence before he was born of the virgin, that what he did was not to give satisfaction to God for sin, but only to give men a pattern of heroic virtue, and to seal His doctrines by His death; while Original Sin, Grace, and Predestination pass with them for mere chimeras; the Sacraments are esteemed empty ceremonies; and they also deny the immensity of God and His omniscience,—for they allow Him not the knowledge of contingencies, —I say, while these and many more gross heresies are held by them, they undermine the very bottom and foundation of the religion of Jesus, the Son of God, and are therefore in danger of hell-fire."

"Nor do I in this advice and direction act as the Pharisees of old

who laid heavy burdens on men's shoulders, but touched them not with one of their fingers; for it doubtless becomes me, in the public station which I hold, to make examination as to the state of things in these respects in the School of the Prophets; for that from thence proceed those streams which we trust will make glad the city of God. Wherefore, I am glad I can, from my own examination of things, assure this venerable audience this day, that this Society (Harvard College) hath not deserved the aspersions which have of late been made upon it, either as to the principles there prevalent, or the books there read; and though such as have given out a disadvantageous report of us, I doubt not have done it in a godly jealousy, for these churches of Christ which are supplied from us, yet—blessed be God!—they are at least mistaken herein. Nor has that Society been in so happy a state as to these things, from the time I was first acquainted with the principles there—the space of five and thirty years at least—as it is this day."

SHOULD President Holyoke seem to be somewhat lacking in both the wisdom of the serpent and the harmlessness of the dove, it is but justice to quote from other Convention preachers in the way of offset. Four years after President Holyoke, Ebenezer Gay, of Hingham, preached the Convention sermon of 1746, from John 1:32, on "The Dove-like Spirit." He argues that it should especially belong to ministers, and contrasts it with "the intemperate zeal and satirical virulence that hath brought much smoke and darkness into the Sanctuary; the noise and clamor of controversy which hath greatly disturbed the peace of our churches. It argues the defect of a dove-like spirit among us, that when we were not all of one mind in some matters, we did not join together in the main, and do as much of God's work as we could, in concurrent unanimity according to the apostles' advice in Philippians 3: 16; ministers so often choosing to insist upon the offensive peculiarities of the party they have espoused rather than upon the more weighty things in which we are all agreed. And so we have seemed to the people as preachers of two Christs, of different ways to heaven. . . .

"In mentioning these things which breathe not a dove-like spirit, I intend not a charge against all, but an address to the consciences of all, that we may all reflect and see how far we are guilty before the Omniscient and heart-searching God. We have those whose moderation has been known to all men in the late Provocation, the day of temptation that has passed over us. But upon impartial inquiry may not the most of us discern great and manifold defects in this ministerial requisite, and confess that we have not taken heed to our spirit as we should have done if we had kept our mouth with a bridle in the fiercest strife of tongues. . . . If any man, be he clergyman or

layman, hath not a dove-like spirit, he hath not Christ's. It is for a lamentation that the spirit of the late times hath not been more so; that while many have been ready to boast of their receiving the Holy Ghost in a way and measure not common to ordinary Christians, people in divers places have been like vultures and ravens, birds of prey, biting and devouring one another, and God's heritage is now 'as a speckled bird, and the birds round about are against her.'—Jer. 12: 8."

Among the Convention preachers who took this line of things was Dr. Jedidiah Morse, of Charlestown, who in the sermon for 1812, from 1 Tim. 1: 15, took much pains to distinguish between the essential and the non-essential doctrines in God's plan of recovering man, and the necessity of such a distinction as a standard for trying creeds and confessions, his whole argument leading to a "Discovery of a simple, easy, and happy method by which all calamitous divisions, both in Church and State, may be effectually healed, and a final end put to all our political and religious controversies, viz., true charity." . . . Heresies "There must be among you that they which are approved may be made manifest among you." Our great fault is in not regarding the pertinent exhortation of the Apostle, "Let all bitterness and clamor and evil speaking be put away from you;" and if we must differ, let these be the conditions—Christian charity and a wise moderation; let every one of the members of Christ be ambitions of that praise which Gregory Nazianzen gives to Athanasius, "To be adamant to them that strike him, and a load-stone to those that dissent from him—the one, not to be moved with wrong; the other, to draw those hearts which disagree."

THE REVEREND DR. CHARLES STEARNS, of Lincoln, in the Convention sermon for 1815, which is mainly a plea against separation between the "Orthodox" and the "Unitarians," gives the following recipe for making a sermon: "Take first a text in which a doctrine is seen prominent, growing as it were out of the word. Then assemble other Scriptures, relative to the same point, notice their respective bearing and concentrate their evidence and force in a single view. Let the doctrine be enforced by due motives and applied to practice. Then he has made a sermon. Will he do any better if he first determine the doctrine and then hunt for a text; if he place Plato, Zeno, or somebody else in front and leave his Divine Master in the background; if he quote from various authors, season it with scraps of philosophy, and stuff it with metaphysical disquisition?

"Assured that his doctrines agree with the Word of God, he needs not to give himself any uneasiness whether it be agreeable to Calvin or Erasmus, nor need he fear lest his discourse should be unpopular.

His audience will approve this method of grounding his discourses directly on the Scriptures. He will unite his people and peaceably stay among them."

Dr. Stearns, in his plea for toleration, gives this significant warning: "A terrible commotion was excited in our churches in Massachusetts between those who called themselves Calvinists and those who were called Arminians. This controversy, the writer of this saw at its full height. It was calculated that one fifth, at least, of all our country parishes were in a divided state. Confusion was immense. Party rage appeared in hideous forms. Many ministers lost their parishes. The destruction was nearly equal on both sides. The College was libelled. The libeller was confuted, and his mortification terminated only with his life. The ministers of Boston were assailed in pamphlets and public discourses. One of the assailants was prosecuted and escaped punishment by a verdict of *non compos*. This controversy was dying of lingering debility from 1765 to 1769, when it was said to be actually dead, for no apparent cause but the disgust of all sober Christians at the mischiefs it occasioned."

In the *concio ad clerum*, by Isaac Loring, of Sudbury in 1742, he instances as among the temptations and oppositions that ministers encounter those incidental to a sedentary life. "Satan takes advantage thereof and raises a world of infernal darkness in their minds; scruples and jealousies touching their state God-ward, which prove a soul-wounding disquietment. So does the Devil seek to hinder them in their work. So he smites the under shepherds that their flocks may be scattered."

ADDRESS TO THE PROVINCIAL CONGRESS.

THE "Address" made by the Convention to the Provincial Congress, and signed by President Langdon, Moderator, May 31, 1775, was as follows: "To the Hon. Joseph Warren, Esquire, President of the Provincial Congress of the Colony of Massachusetts Bay:—Sir: We the pastors of the Congregational churches of the Colony of Massachusetts Bay, in our present annual Convention, beg leave to express the grateful sense we have of the regard shown by the Honorable Provincial Committee to us and the encouragement they have been pleased to afford to our assembly as a Body, this day. Deeply impressed with sympathy for the distresses of our much injured and oppressed country, we are not a little relieved in beholding the representatives of the people, chosen by their free and unbiased suffrages, now met to concert measures for the relief and defense, in whose wisdom and integrity, under the smiles of Divine Providence, we cannot but express our entire confidence.

“ As it has been found necessary to raise an Army for the common safety, and our brave countrymen have so willingly offered themselves to this hazardous service, we are not insensible of the vast burden that their necessary maintenance must induce upon this people. Therefore we cannot forbear upon this occasion, to offer our services to the public, and to signify our readiness with the consent of our several congregations to officiate by rotation, as Chaplains to the Army.

“ We devoutly commend the Congress and our brethren in arms to the guidance and protection of that Providence which from the first settlement of this country has so remarkably appeared for the preservation of its civil and religious rights.”

RULES OF CONVENTION.

I.

Who are members.

Every Congregational minister in this State who has been regularly ordained in this State, and has the stated pastoral charge of any church in this Commonwealth, or having been a pastor for ten years, has been dismissed without reproach and has not changed his profession, is a member of this Convention.

II.

Time of meeting, etc.

The Convention shall be opened on the last Wednesday of May, at 5 o'clock P.M.; and, on the following day, at 11 o'clock A.M., a sermon shall be delivered in public, before the Convention, and a collection made for the indigent widows and orphans of Congregational ministers.

III.

Who to preside. Scribe to be chosen.

The person who preaches the annual Convention sermon, or, in his absence, the second preacher, shall be moderator of Convention for that year. He shall take the chair precisely at the hour of forming the Convention, shall immediately call the members to order, and open the meeting with prayer, after which a scribe shall be chosen by ballot.

IV.

Method of bringing subjects before Convention.

When any person has any subject or question to propose to Convention for their consideration, he shall give it in, before the Convention proceeds to business, to the scribe, to be by him put on the list of articles to be acted on by Convention.

V.

Minutes to be read. Treasurer and Auditor.

At the first meeting in each year, immediately after the choice of a scribe, the minutes of the preceding Convention, and the rules of proceeding, and articles of business, shall be read. The auditor's report on the treasurer's account shall then be made, after which a treasurer shall be chosen by ballot, and an auditor appointed on nomination, for the ensuing year.

VI.

Duties and privileges of the moderator.

The moderator may speak to points of order, in preference to other members, rising from his seat for that purpose, and shall decide questions of order, subject to an appeal to the Convention by any two members. If the moderator shall wish to give his opinion on any question not relating to a point of order, he shall leave the chair, appointing some other member to take it, and shall not resume it while that subject is pending.

VII.

Motions to be seconded, etc.

A motion made must be seconded, and afterwards repeated by the moderator, or read aloud, before it is debated; and every motion shall be reduced to writing, if the moderator or any member require it.

VIII.

Disposal of motions.

After a motion, being seconded, is stated by the moderator, it shall be deemed to be in possession of the Convention, and shall be disposed of by vote of Convention; but the mover may withdraw it, at any time, before a decision or amendment.

IX.

What motions may be debated, etc.

Motions to adjourn, and for the previous question, shall be decided without debate. On questions of order and commitment, no member shall speak more than once. On all other questions each member may speak twice, but not oftener, without express leave of the Convention, nor till all other members choosing to speak shall have spoken.

X.

What motions are in order during a debate.

When a question is under debate, no motion shall be received, unless to amend it, to postpone it, for the previous question, or to

adjourn; which motions shall be in order at any time, unless a member has possession of the floor.

XI.

Amendments to motions.

An amendment may be made to any motion, provided it does not entirely change the character and object of the original motion, and shall be decided before the original motion.

XII.

Motions may be divided.

If a motion contain several parts, it may be divided, and a question taken on each part.

XIII.

Call for the previous question.

A call for the previous question having been made by any two members, it shall be immediately put in the following form: "Shall the main question be now taken?"

XIV.

Effect of a vote on the previous question.

If a call for the previous question be sustained, the main question shall be immediately put. If the call be not sustained, the debate may proceed.

XV.

When questions may be reconsidered.

A question shall not be again called up, or reconsidered, at the same Convention, at which it has been decided, unless by the consent of two thirds of the members present.

XVI.

Conduct of members.

Every member, when speaking, shall address himself to the moderator; and while business is going on, there shall be no private conversation between the members; nor shall members address one another, nor any person present, but through the moderator.

XVII.

Members not to be interrupted.

No speaker shall be interrupted, unless he be out of order, or for the purpose of correcting mistakes or misrepresentations.

XVIII.

Members rising at the same time.

If two or more members rise to speak, at the same time, the moderator shall name the member who is first to speak.

XIX.

Committees to be nominated by the moderator.

The moderator shall nominate all committees, except when the Convention shall direct otherwise.

XX.

Motions relating to blanks and times.

When various motions are made with respect to filling blanks, with particular numbers or times, the question shall always be taken first on the highest number, and the longest time.

XXI.

How votes are to be taken.

Questions shall ordinarily be decided by vote of hand, and the decision declared by the moderator. If any member doubt the decision, there shall be a division of the Convention, in such way as the moderator shall direct.

XXII.

Objects of the charity of Convention.

The indigent widows of Congregational ministers, in this Commonwealth, and their orphan children, are the proper objects of the charity of this Convention.

XXIII.

Central and Reporting Committees.

Two standing committees shall be appointed; one, of five members, to be chosen centrally, and to be denominated the *Central Committee*; the other of twenty-five members, in different parts of the State, to be denominated the *Reporting Committee*.

The *CENTRAL COMMITTEE* shall receive from the members of the *Reporting Committee* applications and statements of facts, in behalf of persons who may be subjects of the charity of Convention, and, having considered the same, shall judge of the persons to be relieved, and the proportion to be given to each, and make report to Convention, on the first day of their meeting, annually.

The REPORTING COMMITTEE shall, each year, investigate the circumstances of the objects of this charity, and make a particular statement to the Central Committee, at least one week before the meeting of Convention. Should any member neglect so to do, for two successive years, his place in the committee shall be vacated.

The scribe and treasurer of Convention shall be, *ex officio*, members of the Central Committee.

The statements from members of the Reporting Committee shall contain a full and explicit answer to each of the following questions, in respect to every object of charity:—

1. What is her age?
2. What are the number, the sex, the ages, and the circumstances of her children?
3. What is a fair estimate of her property?
4. What is her ability to help herself?
5. What connections has she, who are bound to afford her assistance? And in what way do they assist her?
6. What is her income?
7. What peculiar circumstances render her an object of charity; or make it desirable that she should have aid, this year?

CONVENTION AND CONGREGATIONAL CHARITABLE SOCIETY.

THE RELATION between CONVENTION and the MASSACHUSETTS CONGREGATIONAL CHARITABLE SOCIETY is fully set forth and explained in the following report made to CONVENTION in 1835.

The Committee appointed by this Convention on the twenty-ninth of May, 1834, "to inquire into the origin and progress of the charitable funds of this Convention, and also of the fund of the Massachusetts Congregational Charitable Society," have attended to that service, and ask leave respectfully to report:—

That from the silence of both the Scribe's and Treasurer's records, they have been unable exactly to ascertain all the circumstances relative to the funds of this Convention.

The first records of this body extant commence in 1748. By these it appears that they had previously collected sums of money for benevolent objects; for thanks were that year voted to Dr. Sewall as treasurer, and he was rechosen to that office.

The first record in the Treasurer's books bears date May 30, 1765, seventeen years after the first date entered by the Scribe of Convention.

From the "Historical sketch of the Convention" published in 1821, it appears that the moneys collected by Convention had been wholly distributed among indigent ministers and societies till 1762, when a question was proposed "whether the Convention will choose a committee to consider what may be done to render their annual contribution more extensively useful and beneficial; and, in order hereto, whether a part should be applied to the use of ministers' widows and children, who might need the same, as well as to indigent ministers." It was voted in the affirmative, and of the collection that year £4, 10s, O. T., were appropriated to the proposed fund. Thus humble was its origin.

Accessions were occasionally made to this fund by contributions, donations, and otherwise; and a committee of this body was raised to take care of it, till there should an incorporated society for the purpose.

In the meantime, on May 23, 1766, this Convention received a bequest, which now amounts to \$400, for the relief of their indigent widows from the estate of Judah Monis, a Jew by birth, who had embraced the Christian religion, and taught Hebrew in Harvard University; the income of said fund to be annually divided among four widows by trustees appointed for this purpose, with the concurrence of the Convention.

An addition was made to the fund of this Convention in May, 1775, by the executors of Hon. John Alford, of Charlestown, amounting to £50 sterling.

On August 29, 1826, an accession was made to the fund of this Convention of \$300 by bequest, from Mrs. Sarah Dearborn, formerly Bowdoin.

These are the most considerable sums which at any time have been given expressly to the Convention.

On March 24, 1786, was incorporated the Massachusetts Congregational Charitable Society, for the humane and benevolent purpose of affording relief and support to the widows and children of deceased ministers. The act directs that said society shall never exceed thirty, in equal proportions of the clergy and laity.

After reading the act, the Convention, at their meeting in May, 1786, accepted the following report, which had been made by a committee of their body.

"It appears to your Committee that the society lately incorporated by the name of the Massachusetts Congregational Charitable Society is so constituted as to answer the general purposes for which Convention has so long wished to have a society incorporated; and your Committee think it advisable that Convention order the treasurer to deliver such moneys as he may now have belonging to Convention

into the hands of the treasurer of said society by some vote of the following kind:—

“Whereas there is now in the treasury of Convention the sum of five hundred and seventy-one pounds, one shilling, and seven pence, in public and private securities, which sum has been given by divers persons, the interest of which is to be used for the benefit of the poor widows and orphans of deceased ministers, which moneys the Convention wish to have in the hands of a legal trust; therefore,

“Voted: that the treasurer of the Convention be directed to put the above-mentioned securities and what other property he may have belonging to the Convention into the hands of the treasurer of the Massachusetts Congregational Charitable Society, to be improved by said society in such ways as in their wisdom they shall judge most conducive to the benevolent purposes of the donors; the interest of which securities, and such other property as the Convention may put into the hands of said society, to be distributed from time to time, agreeably to the advice of the Convention.”

The report was accepted. The Convention accordingly transferred to the society, in trust, £571 1s. 7d. From that time to the present, the funds of Convention have been held and improved in the same manner as the society’s stock; and an annual account is rendered to the Convention of their exact state, as also of the separate fund of the Massachusetts Congregational Charitable Society.

Till of late years the Convention used to spend annually but a small portion of their income, and add the balance to their capital; so that in May, 1834, their fund, in the care of the Massachusetts Congregational Charitable Society, amounted to \$6,370.35.

From its incorporation, the Massachusetts Congregational Charitable Society has been uninterruptedly receiving from benevolent individuals and societies generous accessions to its capital. Without attempting to enumerate the many smaller sums, your Committee have thought that it may gratify the Convention to know to whom the society has been indebted in successive years for the amount of \$100 and upwards.

| | |
|---|------------|
| On 28 May, 1787, received by bequest from John Winslow, | \$666. 666 |
| 23 May, 1791, " " donation " Thomas Russell, | 666. 666 |
| 3 Jan. 1794, " " " Jonathan Mason, Sen. | 100. |
| 12 Feb. 1795, " " collections in Boston, | 337. 61 |
| 13 Apr. 1795, " " donation from Jonathan Mason, Sen. | 100. |
| 25 May, 1795, " " Joseph Barrell, | 400. |
| 30 May, 1798, " " bequest " Jonathan Mason, Sen. | 300. |
| 23 Nov. 1801, " " subscriptions collected by Sam'l Eliot, | 4,376. |
| 23 May, 1803, " " collection in Concord, | 100. |
| 14 Jun. 1805, " " Dr. Eliot from person unknown, | 100. |
| 2 Mar. 1809, " " bequest from Joseph Larkin, Charles- | |
| town, | 200. |

| | |
|---|---------------------|
| On 15 Mar. 1810, received by donation from Samuel Dexter, Sen. | \$200. |
| 22 Feb. 1811, " " bequest from Anna Cabot Lowell, in trust, | 8,175. |
| The society receives no income from this at present, but will in time have the income of the whole. | |
| 14 Feb. 1813, received by bequest from John Derby, | 1,000. |
| 26 Oct. 1815, " " donation from Israel Thorndike, | 150. |
| 23 Oct. 1817, " " bequest from Rebecca Lowell, charged with a limited annuity of \$50 per annum. | 2,400 |
| 25 May, 1818, received by donation from Benjamin Pickman, | 150. |
| 16 July 1818, " " " Peter C. Brooks, | 200. |
| 20 Jan. 1820, " " bequest " Sarah Russell, | 480. |
| 11 May, 1820, " " " Samuel Eliot, | 3,000. |
| 16 Nov. 1820, " " " Joseph Coolidge, | 500. |
| 12 Nov. 1823, " " donation from William Lambert, | 150. |
| 23 May, 1825, " " " Gorham Parsons, | 100. |
| 28 May, 1827, " " " Joseph Peabody, | 5,000. |
| 25 Sep. 1827, " " bequest from William Phillips, | 5,000. |
| 26 Sep. 1831, " " " Mrs. E. Derby, | 500. |
| 9 May, 1833, " " donation from Peter C. Brooks, | 100. |
| making | <u>\$29,561.942</u> |

which have been added to the funds of said society in sums of \$100 and upwards.

Your Committee know not how they can so well fulfill their commission in respect to the fund of the Massachusetts Congregational Charitable Society, as by extracts from a report of a committee made to that body, on April 30 last, which report was unanimously adopted and is intended as the basis of the society's future operations.

This report states that from 1786 to 1801, a period of fifteen years, no grant whatever was made from the income of the society's separate fund, and only a moderate grant each year from the funds of the Convention in trust with the society.

In 1801, the first grant was made from the separate funds of the society, namely: \$50 to the widow of the Rev. Ebenezer Hubbard, of Marblehead. The joint funds of the society and the Convention were then \$10,371.13; so that the largest sum granted in any one year during this period did not amount to one quarter part of the income of the two funds united.

From 1802 to 1815, thirteen years, small grants were sometimes made to individuals from the income of the society's separate funds; but never to more than three in any one year, and never more than \$175 to all of them in the aggregate.

In 1812, 1813, 1814, 1815, \$150 were given each year to the Convention from the society's separate means, so that in the last-named year the society gave away \$325; but its separate fund in that year was \$23,175.41, so that it gave away just about one fifth of its income, laying up four fifths.

In 1816 the grants were the same in amount; but the number of individuals to whom \$175 were distributed was raised to eight, thus greatly diminishing the sum given to each, while at the same time the society gave away less than one fifth of its separate income.

It is worthy of remark that its affairs during the fourteen years just noticed were chiefly managed by the late Governor Sullivan, Hon. George Cabot, Samuel Parkman, Esq., Chief Justice Parsons, Samuel Eliot, Esq., Rev. Dr. Porter, and Lieutenant-Governor Phillips, who by their personal exertions and liberality, and by the system of policy they pursued, laid the foundations of its present prosperity and usefulness.

From 1817 to 1834, seventeen years, the society has made grants to a larger number of individuals, and to a larger amount than at any preceding period. Two hundred dollars have been every year given to the Convention, and to individuals, varying in number from seventeen to forty-four, an annual sum rising gradually from \$500 to \$1,400, which last sum was reached in 1829, and has been granted regularly since, so that for six years the aggregate of grants has been \$1,600 annually.

For the years ending in May, 1834, the grants were \$1,600, and the gain carried to the general fund of the society was \$1,075.80, so that the society gave away last year almost exactly three fifths of its means, laying up two fifths.

From this statement, therefore, embracing the entire half-century of the society's existence, it appears that the principle of a large and constant accumulation, to be furnished from the income of the society's funds, has always been relied upon as the basis of its increased usefulness; and that if that principle had not been carefully adhered to, the society would now have been an institution of but little comparative value.

For reasons given at large, obvious and satisfactory, the report proceeds to state: "Our prosperity will probably prevent such considerable exertions to increase our funds as were made when we were poorer; so that, though we may still confidently rely on the wise liberality of Christian benevolence in favor of a charity which seems to be as really an unmixed blessing as any human institution can be, we ought not to conceal from ourselves that its claims are less prominent and imperative than they formerly were, and that we must therefore expect hereafter fewer large legacies and donations.

"Between 1817 and 1834 we received in gifts \$12,724, and accumulated from our own income \$12,546.32; so that our funds rose in these seventeen years from \$25,635.44 to \$50,905.76, or were almost doubled; and doubled, too, in almost exactly equal sums, obtained from our own savings, and from the Christian liberality of our

friends. Hereafter we must probably depend more on our own economy and less on the generosity and contributions of others.

"From the whole history of the society, therefore, from its present condition and relations, and from its probable future wants and duties, the Committee are unanimously of the opinion that a principle of constant accumulation from the income of our funds should be strictly maintained. They are also unanimous on the proportion to be observed between the amount of income to be saved, and the amount that may probably be safely given away, being convinced that not more than four sevenths can be safely given away, and that the remaining three sevenths should be added to the fund. They are also persuaded that so much as this can be judiciously granted only during a period of the society's prosperity, and when no losses are immediately apprehended. For, on any more free or generous principle of distribution they are persuaded the society will not be able to perform its duties to future generations of claimants on its means, either so thoroughly as our predecessors in the trust have performed them toward us, or so thoroughly as we are now performing them towards the families of the deceased clergymen, to whom we annually make grants."

From the statement made this season to the Convention by the treasurer of the Massachusetts Congregational Charitable Society it appears that the fund of said society now amounts to \$51,948.42; that the fund of Convention in care of said society amounts to \$6,370.35; and that the bequest of Miss Anna C. Lowell, in trust, is \$8,175, making \$66,493.77.

As the Massachusetts Congregational Charitable Society stately communicate to this Convention the amount of their fund, your Committee would suggest the propriety of requesting that they would also communicate to this body, from year to year, the persons aided with the sums respectively appropriated.

Thus your Committee have executed to the best of their ability the trust reposed in them, their object being not so much to furnish an original document as to extract from the most authentic sources what may be known of the origin and progress of the charitable fund of this Convention, and also of the fund of the Massachusetts Congregational Charitable Society.

All which is respectfully submitted.

[Signed]

JOHN PIERCE.

WARREN FAY.

May 27, 1835.

The fund of the Congregational Charitable Society has been much increased in the fifty and more years since this report was made, and in 1888 the amount of income to be distributed to sixty beneficiaries is \$9,000.

TERMS ON WHICH AID IS GIVEN BY THE CONVENTION
AND CONGREGATIONAL CHARITABLE SOCIETY.

THE question is often asked, What are the requirements for receiving aid from the Convention or from the Congregational Charitable Society? The answer to the first inquiry will be found in the rules of Convention, published on p. 41 of the present volume, and to the second in the following by-laws of the Charitable Society: —

V. OF THE SECRETARY.

The secretary . . . shall notify the *Massachusetts Convention of Congregational Ministers* at its annual meeting, or the Scribe of the same, what is the *amount of the Funds of said Convention in trust with this Society*, and what is the amount of the income of said funds for the year preceding, as both shall have been set forth in the last accounts of the Treasurer of this Society.

VII. OF COMMITTEES.

Two Committees shall be appointed at each annual meeting, namely: —

First, a Committee on Appropriations, consisting of not less than three members, who shall, at the next annual meeting after their appointment, report the names of the persons whom they may consider most suitable to become Beneficiaries of the Society, for the year next following the presentation of such report, together with the sum of money they may consider suitable to be given by the Society to each; provided always, that said Committee shall propose appropriations to no persons except indigent widows and indigent children of deceased Congregational Ministers who have been settled as Congregational Ministers within this Commonwealth, and that no person shall by them be deemed and taken to have been a settled Minister for this purpose who was not in the Pastoral Office in the State of Massachusetts at the time of his death,¹ and who — if in his original settlement it had been stipulated that his ministry should be terminated in less than five years — had not been in such Pastoral Office for at least five years preceding his death, — nothing in this article being intended to affect the claims of any widows or children of Congregational clergymen who were settled in the State of Maine while that State was a part of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

¹ This rule, however, does not prevent appropriations to the families of those deceased ministers, who, though not in active service at the time of their death held the position of *pastor emeritus*.

THE MONIS FUND.

(From the Historical Sketch of Convention.)

MR. JUDAH MONIS, a Jew by birth, who had embraced the Christian religion and had been baptized at Cambridge, where he lived many years as a Hebrew instructor, died in 1764, leaving most of his estate to this pious charity. How it was to be managed and applied appears by the will. "I also will that all my real estate be sold by my executors, . . . and that the proceeds of such sale be deposited in the hands of the Rev. Messrs. Nathaniel Appleton, minister of the first parish in Cambridge, Ebenezer Gay of Hingham, minister of the first parish there, John Martin, minister of the second parish in Westborough (now Northborough), Andrew Eliot of Boston, minister of a church of Christ there, and Thomas Barnard of Salem, minister of a church of Christ there, or their respective successors in said office, for the relief of the poor widows of the ministers of Christ in the province . . . in this form, namely: the principal sum to be let out on lawful interest by the said ministers and their said successors in the office aforesaid forever, and the interest thereof distributed by them or the major part of them, as they, with the advice of the ministers of the Congregational persuasion, at their anniversary meeting, shall judge proper forever."

Mr. Monis also gave for the same purpose such part of his personal estate as should not, after his decease, be found disposed of to other persons or uses. On the settlement of the estate, the sum ordered by the judge of probate to be paid to the trustees, 23 May, 1766, was one hundred and eleven pounds, sixteen shillings, and eight pence.

A note says: "The Monis fund is now \$400, the interest of which the trustees annually divide among four widows, with the concurrence of Convention, to which they make an annual report."

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REPORT ON THE QUESTION OF IMPROVING OR DISSOLVING CONVENTION.

THE resolution, on which your Committee has been appointed to report, is this: —

Resolved, That a committee of seven be appointed to consider what methods may be practicable to make the annual meetings and general action of the Convention more efficient; and whether it is expedient to dissolve the Convention; and, if so, what disposition shall be made of its funds.

A full consideration of the *second* of these inquiries, namely, "whether it is expedient to dissolve the Convention," will lead to clear conclusions respecting the other two; namely, "What methods

may be practicable to make the annual meetings and general action of the Convention more efficient;" and, "what disposition shall be made of its funds," should the Convention be dissolved.

I. The basis of this Convention is Congregationalism, as a Scriptural form of church government. Its founders were the Congregational ministers of the Commonwealth. They were accustomed to meet in this city, annually, at the spring term of the General Court, — and at that time of our State history, when Congregationalism may be said with some propriety, though not with absolute truth, to have been the State religion; and certainly, when its ministers exerted, by their judgment, and expressed opinions, a very great degree of influence on the legislation of the Commonwealth.

As they thus met, there were among them, from the first, varieties of belief and opinion respecting the nature and statement of religious doctrines. Some were Arminians, others Calvinists, as in later times some have been Unitarians, others Trinitarians. But they were all Congregationalists.

Without holding that any one form of church government was of absolute Divine authority, they all firmly believed that the first source of ecclesiastical power was in the brethren of each church, regularly organized, with its membership, its office-bearers, and its pastors and teachers. They held that each church was subject to no control over its own procedure, in word, doctrine, or government, from any body without itself, while necessary advice was asked from a Mutual Council with sister churches, composed of delegates appointed from each church, and extending its *authority* only so far as its limits were distinctly stated in the letters missive calling them together.

Meeting yearly in such circumstances, the ministers of the Commonwealth held varieties of doctrinal belief. These led then, and afterwards, at times, to animated and sometimes bitter controversies, in the midst of which, nevertheless, they continued to be Congregationalists.

Being such, they, like all men, were subjected from year to year to the providential chastisements of God, in the forms of sickness and death. And, mutually feeling for the distresses of the widows and orphans of their brethren, they met in Convention, and appointed one of their number to preach from the Scriptures words suited to their case; and in connection with this service they gathered contributions from their hearers, and from one another, to relieve their widows' wants and dry their orphans' tears.

While the nature of this, their public service, was mainly Congregational and charitable, it was, to an extent, varying with the times through which they might be passing, also doctrinal. So that their yearly discourses sometimes took the form of what has been called a

concio ad clerum, in which doctrines respecting which there were great differences of opinion were ably discussed. But in all of them the speakers and hearers were, as now, Congregationalists; striving professedly to speak the truth in love, though contending, it may be, for the form of sound words with an apparent bitterness; possibly, in the infirmities of our common nature, with some uncharitableness, if not bigotry. Yet always, as Congregationalists, whose church-standing no man or body of men could annul or injure, so long as the members of his church clung to the preacher, as their pastor and teacher, under Christ.

In all these religious services and discourses, the widows and orphans of their deceased brethren were not forgotten by themselves, nor by the worthy and beneficent members of their churches and religious societies. Soon, therefore, through the liberality of the members of these churches and societies, and their own contributions, they accumulated a fund amounting to \$7,000. It thus became necessary that a society, with authority to hold permanent funds, should be chartered by the State. This led to the incorporation in 1786, of what is now called the Massachusetts Congregational Charitable Society, with authority to hold property, not exceeding \$200,000; an amount which, by the judicious and faithful management of some of the wisest financiers of our State and city, and the bequests of many of our best citizens, it already holds. The society is composed of fifteen clergymen and fifteen laymen; these last chosen from our first merchants and professional men. And it ought to be said here, with gratitude to God and man, that a nobler charity than this has never been dispensed, with a more benevolent and just care, to the destitute families of deceased ministers of the gospel. It has divided for the current year \$10,500 among sixty widows and orphans, varying from \$250 to \$100 to each person, as their known wants are seen to require, uninfluenced by any regard to the articles of their religious creed, and only requiring that they shall be known as the needy widows or children of departed Congregational pastors. It has also voted that \$500 from its income be added to that of the fund of the Convention for the benefit of the widows and children aided by it in the current year, most of whom are also recipients of its own yearly aid.

Your committee can here dispose, in a few words, of the last inquiry of the resolution they have been instructed to consider; namely: "What disposition shall be made of its funds should the Convention be dissolved?" They cannot be better invested in any exigency than in those hands by which they have been held in trust, and faithfully improved from the first, the hands of this Congregational Charitable Society, their income to be forever devoted to relieve the wants of our widows and children.

II. Inferring and assuming now from the facts just stated that this Convention ought not to be dissolved while Congregationalism lives in our ancient Commonwealth, your committee respectfully suggests that it would add greatly to the "efficiency of our annual meetings," if its preachers, among the other topics illustrated and enforced in connection with this charity, would choose our form of church government among their themes. This whole subject is requiring, increasingly, in our day and country the attention of thoughtful men, particularly that of ministers of the gospel.

No one can read the history of the Puritans, the Brownists, and the Congregationalists of Old England, and that of the Pilgrims of New England, without being heartily and deeply convinced that the forms of church government among men, though always to be kept subordinate, and held as unessential, compared with the spirit of genuine faith in Christ and obedience to his gospel, are yet of the greatest importance to the purity and power of religion. No one can read this history, as a Congregationalist, without feeling that in respect to liberty of conscience and freedom of faith and practice, in obedience to the truth as it is in Jesus, each of us ought to feel and say, as he thinks of the imprisonments, the sufferings, the deaths of many of his religious ancestry for conscience' sake, what the chief captain said to Paul of his Roman citizenship, "With a great sum obtained I this freedom."

We should value this freedom so highly as to use every good occasion for spreading the knowledge of its principles among the people whom we serve in the Lord. And few occasions afford a more appropriate opportunity for this than is given by our annual Convention sermon.

May we not appropriately speak then of the freedom of our system of worship and church government from the dangers of formality and ritualism? Of its favorableness to liberty in the study and declaration of religious truth? Of its analogy to our Federal republic, which may be termed in its relations to the several States, and of each of them to it, the Congregationalism of civil government, its administration on such principles ever requiring a watchful regard to the spirit in which it shall be exercised. Even the inconveniences of our system, considered as the occasions of our discipline in the Christian virtues of patience, forbearance, and longsuffering are its high recommendation. Congregationalism, in its principles, needs also to be carefully applied to our theory and practice respecting benevolent societies, particularly to those which are incorporated and hold funds.

III. The signs of our times show that we may become, under the guidance and influence of the Holy Spirit of God imbuing us through

the truth with the spirit of our Lord and Master, more united than we have been in doctrine. So that the annual sermon may be, at appropriate times, a kind of *concilio ad clerum*, in which doctrines may be discussed without the bitterness of controversy.

There is a strong tendency among us now to reduce the evidences of Christian character and terms of communion to the simplest elements of repentance towards God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. And while probably all of us, as Congregational ministers, would say that in judging of ministerial character and official qualifications for preaching the gospel, a more careful and specific knowledge of religious truth and doctrine should be sought for and required than it is right or expedient to seek for in the reception of professed believers into the fellowship and communion of the church, so that we should lay hands suddenly on no man, in ordaining any one as a preacher of the gospel and pastor of a church, still, the spirit of a watchful Christian charity and liberality is to be ever cherished and practised in our intercourse and coöperation with one another as Congregational ministers.

Looking at our respective differences, as Calvinists or Arminians, Trinitarians or Unitarians, in the light of such sentiments the signs of our time indicate that, in regard to some of us, there is ground for reasonable hope that the great essential truths of the gospel in respect to which we have differed may be so simply stated that we may, as we have not of late, walk much more nearly together, and be agreed in the work of our common Lord.

Your committee feel authorized to say, because facts known more or less to all of us lead to the conclusion, that such a union of faith and practice in respect to some who have hitherto differed may take place; while others have gone yet farther from the old paths, and "will not walk therein." They hail this growing union as a hopeful sign. They would do nothing to hinder, and everything they can do to insure it, consistently with faithfulness to the essential truths of the gospel.

For such reasons as they have now given, and in the hope of promoting such a consummation, they recommend that this Massachusetts Convention of Congregational Ministers be not dissolved; and that as a means of making its annual meetings and general action more efficient, its members cherish in their preaching and practice the spirit of union and effort for making known and advancing our principles as Congregationalists.

To meet the possibility of a closer union in doctrinal belief, and of any approach to it that may be likely to occur, they recommend that they have leave to continue their deliberations with each other, in such ways as may be practicable, during the coming year; to consider the expediency of suggesting subjects to be treated of in the

pulpit — and possibly in written papers read by its members; and to report progress at the next annual meeting of the Convention.

By authority of the committee, consisting of G. W. Blagden, Boston; John Todd, Pittsfield; S. K. Lothrop, Boston; Seth Sweetser, Worcester; Rufus Ellis, Boston; Edwin G. Adams, Templeton; James H. Means, Dorchester.

Boston, May 29, 1872.

A CIRCULAR LETTER.

BOSTON, 106 Marlborough Street, January 31, 1878.

MY DEAR SIR,— It was my duty to preside, during the last Anniversary Week, over the Massachusetts Convention of Congregational Ministers; and it was made my added duty to call the attention of the Congregational ministers of our State to the existence of this Convention, to urge their attendance upon its yearly gathering, and to inquire of them as to the feasibility of holding a supplementary meeting during Anniversary Week of the present year, which should aim to bring together the Trinitarian and Unitarian sections of the old Congregational body for the purpose of listening to a paper upon some theological or ecclesiastical topic by one of the clergymen who are commonly classed as orthodox, and for entertaining the possibility of a reunion of the Congregationalists. It has seemed to many of us that the time may be at hand when deeper and broader conceptions of Christianity, with fresh explanations of its recognized facts, may add new knowledge to the old faith, and supply the ground for such a reconstruction; and that our body, could it be at one again, is better fitted than any other for that Christian progress which destroys only in fulfilling. Why should not every New England village have again its *one* Congregational Church, with perhaps its right and left wings of membership, but with its undivided Christian mind, with its conservative men and its latitude men, perhaps, but with its one Christian ministry? What but our lamentable divisions hinder us from possessing this section of our land as in former days, and what better form can be given to the unbound Word of Jesus than is supplied by our simple Christian Covenants and elastic Church Order? If only we are engaged to keep alive a genuine and deep Christian experience, and exercise the faith of our congregations in the true ceremonial of charity, may we not be sure that any who are not within the fold of Jesus will have no wish to be so registered, and make any formal act of exclusion needless? Can you suggest any steps by which the ends hinted at in this note may be approached, if indeed they seem to you practical and within our Christian estate? A word in reply will greatly oblige

Yours sincerely, RUFUS ELLIS,
Minister of First Church.

PREACHERS OF THE CONVENTION SERMON.*

The sermons with this mark (†) are in the library of the Massachusetts Historical Society. A complete series of them would be highly valued by a society whose objects are "the collection and preservation, for the use of the public and posterity, of all documents relating to the history and antiquities — ecclesiastical, civil, and natural — of our country."

| A.D. | BY WHOM. | OF WHAT PLACE. | TEXT. |
|-------|---------------------------|---------------------|----------------------|
| 1682. | John Sherman, | Watertown. | |
| 1722. | †Cotton Mather, | Boston. | Rev. 2: 19. |
| 1723. | †Nehemiah Walter, | Roxbury. | 1 Tim. 1: 12. |
| 1724. | †Peter Thacher, | Milton. | Phil. 1: 21 (ms.). |
| 1726. | †William Williams, | Hatfield. | Col. 4: 11. |
| 1728. | John Williams, | Deerfield. | |
| 1738. | John Barnard, | Marblehead. | Col. 1: 18. |
| 1739. | Nathaniel Eeles, | Scituate. | 1 Sam. 4: 13. |
| 1740. | Thomas Prince, | Boston. | Is. 9: 7. |
| 1741. | †Edward Holyoke, | Pres. Har. Coll. | Matt. 16: 6. |
| 1742. | Israel Loring, | Sudbury. | |
| 1743. | †Nathaniel Appleton, D.D. | Cambridge. | Matt. 5: 13, 14. |
| 1744. | †Charles Chauncy, D.D. | Boston. | Titus 2: 15. |
| 1745. | †Peter Clark, | Salem Village. | Rom. 3: 1, 2. |
| 1746. | †Ebenezer Gay, D.D. | Hingham. | John 1: 32. |
| 1748. | Edward Wigglesworth, D.D. | S. T. P. Har. Coll. | |
| 1749. | John Barnard, | Andover. | 2 Cor. 4: 1. |
| 1750. | William Welsteed, | Boston. | 1 Tim. 4: 6. |
| 1751. | Samuel Wigglesworth, | Ipswich. | 2 Cor. 11: 2. |
| 1753. | †Samuel Phillips, | Andover. | Acts 10: 36. |
| 1754. | Stephen Williams, D.D. | Springfield. | Ex. 25: 8. |
| 1755. | Joseph Parsons, | Bradford. | Matt. 5: 14, 15, 16. |
| 1756. | Hull Abbott, | Charlestown. | |
| 1757. | †William Rand, | Kingstown. | 1 Thess. 2: 4. |
| 1758. | †Jonathan Townsend, | Needham. | 1 John 8. |
| 1759. | Ebenezer Pemberton, D.D. | Boston. | Rom. 11: 13. |
| 1760. | William Balch, | Bradford. | 2 Cor. 1: 12. |
| 1761. | †Ebenezer Parkman, | Westborough. | 2 Cor. 5: 14. |
| 1762. | Samuel Mather, D.D. | Boston. | 2 Cor. 11: 28. |
| 1763. | John Lowell, | Newburyport. | 2 Cor. 7: 2. |
| 1765. | Charles Chauncy, D.D. | Boston. | Acts 8: 5. |
| 1766. | Thomas Prentice, | Charlestown. | 1 Cor. 14: 1. |
| 1767. | Andrew Eliot, D.D. | Boston. | James 5: 19, 20. |
| 1768. | †John Tucker, D.D. | Newbury. | Col. 4: 11. |
| 1769. | Samuel Dunbar, | Stoughton. | Gal. 1: 8, 9. |
| 1770. | Samuel Cooper, D.D. | Boston. | Rev. 12: 1. |
| 1771. | Robert Breck, | Springfield. | Heb. 13: 1. |
| 1772. | †Samuel Locke, D.D. | Pres. Har. Coll. | 2 Cor. 4: 2.* |

* For convenience of identification the title D.D. has been appended to the names of those preachers who are entitled to it, though in some cases they received it subsequently to preaching the sermon.

§ Dr. Cotton Mather's sermon, in 1689, has been erroneously supposed to have been delivered before the Convention of Ministers. It was "preached to the Convention of the Colony."

| A.D. | BY WHOM. | OF WHAT PLACE. | TEXT. |
|-------|---------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| 1773. | †Edward Barnard, | Haverhill. | John 4: 36, 37, 38. |
| 1774. | James Chandler, | Rowley. | 2 Tim. 4: 7, 8. |
| 1775. | Benjamin Stevens, D.D. | Kittery. | Matt. 24: 45, 46. |
| 1776. | Samuel Cook, | Cambridge. | 1 Thess. 2: 4. |
| 1777. | Samuel Langdon, D.D. | Pres. Har. Coll. | Gal. 1: 11, 12. |
| 1778. | Isaac Morrill, | Wilmington. | Dan. 12: 3. |
| 1779. | Samuel Webster, D.D. | Salisbury. | Matt. 7: 28, 29. |
| 1780. | Ebenezer Bridge, | Chelmsford. | |
| 1781. | John Mellen, | Hanover. | |
| 1782. | Thaddeus Maccarty, | Worcester. | |
| 1783. | Daniel Shute, D.D. | Hingham. | |
| 1784. | Joseph Willard, D.D. | Pres. Har. Coll. | |
| 1785. | Phillips Payson, D.D. | Chelsea. | |
| 1786. | Moses Hemmenway, D.D. | Wells. | |
| 1787. | Gad Hitchcock, D.D. | Pembroke. | |
| 1788. | Nathan Fiske, D.D. | Brookfield. | |
| 1789. | Jacob Cushing, D.D. | Waltham. | Acts 2: 42. |
| 1790. | Simeon Howard, D.D. | Boston. | |
| 1791. | Jason Haven, | Dedham. | |
| 1792. | Josiah Bridge, | Sudbury. | 1 Thess. 2: 4. |
| 1793. | Thomas Barnard, D.D. | Salem. | Eccles. 3: 1. |
| 1794. | Chandler Robbins, D.D. | Plymouth. | Acts 20: 26. |
| 1795. | Henry Cumings, D.D. | Billerica. | Rom. 11: 13. |
| 1796. | †Jeremy Belknap, D.D. | Boston. | 2 Tim. 1: 8. |
| 1797. | †David Tappan, D.D. | S. T. P. Har. Coll. | Ex. 28: 36, 38. |
| 1798. | †David Osgood, D.D. | Medford. | Matt. 13: 33. |
| 1799. | †Eli Forbes, D.D. | Gloucester. | 2 Cor. 6: 3, 4. |
| 1800. | John Lathrop, D.D. | Boston. | |
| 1801. | †Joseph Dana, D.D. | Ipswich. | Rom. 1: 16. |
| 1802. | Peter Thacher, D.D. | Boston. | Rom. 1: 9. |
| 1803. | Thomas Prentiss, D.D. | Medfield. | Luke 14: 23. |
| 1804. | Nathanael Emmons, | Franklin. | 1 Cor. 1: 10. |
| 1805. | Zedekiah Sanger, D.D. | Bridgewater. | Is. 1: 18. |
| 1806. | †Joseph Lyman, D.D. | Hatfield. | 1 Cor. 11: 1. |
| 1807. | †John Reed, D.D. | Bridgewater. | Matt. 23: 8, 9, 10. |
| 1808. | Daniel Chaplin, D.D. | Groton. | Mal. 2: 7. |
| 1809. | Samuel Spring, D.D. | Newburyport. | 1 Thess. 4: 17, 18. |
| 1810. | †Eliphalet Porter, D.D. | Roxbury. | 2 Cor. 11: 13. |
| 1811. | †Reuben Puffer, D.D. | Berlin. | Col. 4: 11. |
| 1812. | Jedidiah Morse, D.D. | Charlestown. | 1 Tim. 1: 5. |
| 1813. | John T. Kirkland, D.D. | Pres. Har. Coll. | Titus 2: 11, 14. |
| 1814. | Jesse Appleton, D.D. | Pres. Bowd. Coll. | 2 Tim. 1: 10. |
| 1815. | Charles Stearns, D.D. | Lincoln. | John 13: 18. |
| 1816. | William E. Channing, D.D. | Boston. | Is. 2: 4. |
| 1817. | Alvan Hyde, D.D. | Lee. | 2 Pet. 2: 1. |
| 1818. | Henry Ware, D.D. | S. T. P. Har. Coll. | John 20: 31. |
| 1819. | †Abiel Holmes, D.D. | Cambridge. | Titus 1: 7. |
| 1820. | Aaron Bancroft, D.D. | Worcester. | Phil. 1: 17. |
| 1821. | †Elijah Parish, D.D. | Byfield. | Luke 2: 14. |
| 1822. | Zephaniah S. Moore, D.D. | Pres. Wms. Coll. | 1 Cor. 4: 1, 2. |

| A.D. | BY WHOM. | OF WHAT PLACE. | TEXT. |
|-------|---|------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1823. | Leonard Woods, D.D. | Andover. | 2 Cor. 10: 4. |
| 1824. | Thomas Snell, | Brookfield. | Jer. 23: 28, 29. |
| 1825. | John Pierce, D.D. | Brookline. | 2 Tim. 4: 5. |
| 1826. | Charles Lowell, D.D. | Boston. | Acts 20: 24. |
| 1827. | Abiel Abbott, D.D. | Beverly. | Rom. 14: 19. |
| 1828. | Edward D. Griffin, D.D. | Pres. Wms. Coll. | Neh. 2: 20. |
| 1829. | Lyman Beecher, D.D. | Boston. | 1 Tim. 3: 15. |
| 1830. | Heman Humphrey, D.D. | Pres. Amh. Coll. | John 18: 36. |
| 1831. | John Codman, D.D. | Dorchester. | Eph. 4: 31, 32. |
| 1832. | William Jenks, D.D. | Boston. | |
| 1833. | Samuel Osgood, D.D. | Springfield. | 2 Cor. 2: 15, 16. |
| 1834. | Samuel Gile, D.D. | Milton. | 2 Cor. 5: 20. |
| 1835. | Oliver Cobb, D.D. | Rochester. | Ps. 102: 16. |
| 1836. | Brown Emerson, D.D. | Salem. | |
| 1837. | H. Ware, Jr., D.D. | Cambridge. | |
| 1838. | Richard S. Storrs, D.D. | Braintree. | Acts 17: 18. |
| 1839. | George W. Blagden, D.D. | Boston. | 2 Tim. 4: 6. |
| 1840. | Leonard Withington, D.D. | Newbury. | Jude 12. |
| 1841. | John Nelson, | Leicester. | 2 Cor. 10: 4, 5. |
| 1842. | Milton P. Braman, D.D. | Danvers. | Acts 17: 11. |
| 1843. | Joseph Field, D.D. | Weston. | John 18: 37. |
| 1844. | Daniel Dana, D.D. | Newburyport. | Mal. 3: 3. |
| 1845. | Mark Hopkins, D.D. | Pres. Wms. Coll. | Rom. 8: 22, 19. |
| 1846. | †Alvan Lamson, D.D. | Dedham. | 2 Cor. 11: 3. |
| 1847. | Parsons Cooke, D.D. | Lynn. | 1 Cor. 15: 45. |
| 1848. | Ezra S. Gannett, D.D. | Boston. | 2 Tim. 4: 2. |
| 1849. | †Nehemiah Adams, D.D. | Boston. | 2 Tim. 1: 12. |
| 1850. | †Edwards A. Park, D.D. | Andover. | { 1 Sam. 15: 29. Gen. 6: 6. |
| 1851. | J. Woodbridge, D.D. | Hadley. | Is. 40: 18, 14, 15. |
| 1852. | George Putnam, D.D. | Roxbury. | Rom. 2: 15. |
| 1853. | John Todd, D.D. | Pittsfield. | 2 Cor. 11: 3. |
| 1854. | Edward Hitchcock, D.D. | Pres. Amh. Coll. | Gen. 2: 7. |
| 1855. | Samuel K. Lothrop, D.D. | Boston. | 1 Cor. 15: 22. |
| 1856. | Seth Sweetser, D.D. | Worcester. | Matt. 13: 33. |
| 1857. | William A. Stearns, D.D. | Pres. Amh. Coll. | 2 Cor. 2: 16. |
| 1858. | †George E. Ellis, D.D. | Charlestown. | Is. 55: 11. |
| 1859. | †Austin Phelps, D.D. | Andover. | Is. 42: 5, 6. |
| 1860. | Emerson Davis, D.D. | Westfield. | Ps. 18: 30. |
| 1861. | John H. Morison, D.D. | Milton. | Matt. 16: 25. |
| 1862. | Samuel G. Buckingham, D.D. | Springfield. | Matt. 12: 20. |
| 1863. | John P. Cleaveland, D.D. | Lowell. | Neh. 5: 7. |
| 1864. | Cyrus A. Bartol, D.D. | Boston. | 2 Cor. 5: 19. |
| 1865. | No sermon was preached, Thursday, June 1, having been appointed as a national fast by the President of the United States. | | |
| 1866. | Amos Blanchard, D.D. | Lowell. | Matt. 13: 31, 32. |
| 1867. | Frederic H. Hedge, D.D. | Brookline. | Rom. 15: 1. |
| 1868. | Seth Sweetser, D.D. | Worcester. | John 17: 17. |
| 1869. | James H. Means, D.D. | Dorchester. | Rom. 10: 15. |
| 1870. | Alonzo H. Quint, D.D. | New Bedford. | Matt. 10: 42. |

| A.D. | BY WHOM. | OF WHAT PLACE. | TEXT. |
|-------|--------------------------|------------------|------------------|
| 1871. | Alexander McKenzie, D.D. | Cambridge. | Prov. 23: 23. |
| 1872. | Andrew P. Peabody, D.D. | Cambridge. | John 17: 21. |
| 1873. | Gordon Hall, D.D. | Northampton. | Eph. 4: 15. |
| 1874. | George W. Briggs, D.D. | Cambridge. | Mark 12: 37. |
| 1875. | Edward E. Hale, D.D. | Boston. | 1 Cor. 1: 26-28. |
| 1876. | William S. Tyler, D.D. | Amherst. | John 12: 32. |
| 1877. | Rufus Ellis, D.D. | Boston. | Luke 17: 5. |
| 1878. | Edwin B. Webb, D.D. | Boston. | 1 Cor. 13: 9-12. |
| 1879. | Julius H. Seelye, D.D. | Pres. Amh. Coll. | Rom. 8: 19. |
| 1880. | Andrew P. Peabody, D.D. | Cambridge. | Matt. 24: 35. |
| 1881. | Joshua W. Wellman, D.D. | Malden. | 1 Chron. 21: 24. |
| 1882. | Joseph Osgood, | Cohasset. | Luke 18: 8. |
| 1883. | Reuben Thomas, PH.D. | Brookline. | Phil. 3: 12. |
| 1884. | Brooke Herford, | Boston. | Ps. 77: 5. |
| 1885. | Edward S. Atwood, D.D. | Salem. | Ex. 28: 2. |
| 1886. | George W. Briggs, D.D. | Cambridge. | Prov. 27: 19. |
| 1887. | John W. Harding, | Longmeadow. | Prov. 17: 6. |

From an inspection of the subjects it is evident that the discourse has always been considered, not as a mere charity sermon, but as a *concio ad clerum*.

TREASURERS OF CONVENTION.

| | |
|---------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Rev. Joseph Sewall. | Rev. Charles Lowell. |
| Rev. Ebenezer Pemberton. | Rev. Francis Parkman, — 1825. |
| Rev. Andrew Eliot. | Rev. Nathaniel L. Frothingham, |
| Rev. William Gordon. | 1825-1832. |
| Rev. Simeon Howard. | Rev. Alexander Young, 1832-1833. |
| Rev. Oliver Everett. | Rev. George Ripley, 1833-1839. |
| Rev. Joseph Eckley. | Rev. Samuel K. Lothrop, 1839-1867. |
| Rev. John Eliot. | Rev. Rufus Ellis, 1867-1879. |
| Rev. William E. Channing. | Rev. Henry F. Jenks, 1879 —. |

SCRIBES OF CONVENTION.

| | | | |
|-------|------------------------|--------------|-------|
| 1748. | Rev. Mather Byles, | Boston. | 1755. |
| 1755. | Rev. Jonathan Mayhew, | Boston. | 1757. |
| 1757. | Rev. Samuel Cooper, | Boston. | 1758. |
| 1758. | Rev. Andrew Eliot, | Boston. | 1761. |
| 1761. | Rev. Samuel Mather, | Boston. | 1762. |
| 1762. | Rev. Ebenezer Bridge, | Chelmsford. | 1763. |
| 1763. | Rev. Ebenezer Parkman, | Westborough. | 1766. |
| 1766. | Rev. Amos Adams, | Roxbury. | 1776. |
| 1776. | Rev. Jacob Cushing, | Waltham. | 1779. |
| 1779. | Rev. John Lathrop, | Boston. | 1787. |
| 1787. | Rev. John Clarke, | Boston. | 1792. |

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|-------|-------------------------|--------------|-------|
| 1792. | Rev. John Bradford, | Roxbury. | 1794. |
| 1794. | Rev. Jedidiah Morse, | Charlestown. | 1800. |
| 1800. | Rev. John T. Kirkland, | Boston. | 1810. |
| 1810. | Rev. John Pierce, | Brookline. | 1820. |
| 1820. | Rev. John Codman, | Dorchester. | 1830. |
| 1830. | Rev. Benj. B. Wisner, | Boston. | 1833. |
| 1833. | Rev. George W. Blagden, | Boston. | 1839. |
| 1839. | Rev. N. Adams, | Boston. | 1848. |
| 1848. | Rev. A. C. Thompson, | Roxbury. | 1854. |
| 1854. | Rev. S. M. Worcester, | Salem. | 1855. |
| 1855. | Rev. George Richards, | Boston. | 1860. |
| 1860. | Rev. James H. Means, | Dorchester. | 1868. |
| 1868. | Rev. A. H. Quint, | New Bedford. | 1870. |
| 1870. | Rev. A. McKenzie, | Cambridge. | 1871. |
| 1871. | Rev. J. F. Moors, | Greenfield. | 1874. |
| 1874. | Rev. S. E. Herrick, | Boston. | 1876. |
| 1876. | Rev. L. J. Livermore. | Danvers. | 1878. |
| 1878. | Rev. H. A. Hazen, | Billerica. | 1880. |
| 1880. | Rev. E. N. Packard, | Dorchester. | 1887. |
| 1887. | Rev. B. F. Hamilton, | Roxbury. | |

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